

AN EMPIRE OF OTHERS



**CREATING ETHNOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE
IN IMPERIAL RUSSIA AND THE USSR**

EDITED BY ROLAND CVETKOVSKI AND ALEXIS HOFMESITER

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in Imperial Russia and the USSR**

Edited by

Roland Cvetkovski and Alexis Hofmeister



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Introduction: On the Making of Ethnographic Knowledge in Russia

Roland Cvetkovski

'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone,
All just supply, and all relation.

John Donne

As globalization has started crossing common boundaries and has given priority to traffic, transfer, and communication, discontent has also arisen. The rapid circulation of ideas, goods, and values seemed to counteract the need for differentiation, since the previous emphasis on national entities had apparently made it easier to draw clear-cut lines between different cultures. So the distrust of the current processes gave rise to a growing feeling of cultural uncertainty that was partly accompanied even by skepticism towards the state and its agencies. In particular, their responsibility to create well-defined categories and to provide stabilizing guidance for society has been called into question. Recently the German folklorist Konrad Köstlin thus campaigned for alternatives to bring back these seemingly waning possibilities of differentiation. He suggested activating ethnographic knowledge in particular as a “grounding in humanity,” providing a specific “cultural technique” and offering “materials for a new cultural framework.”¹ He is definitely right when he points to the increasing significance that notions like “culture” and “ethnicity” have gained in recent decades in both academic and everyday milieus. Yet it is quite remarkable that in dividing politics and culture, Köstlin’s proposed solution obviously implies a separation between state affairs and ethnographic matters. Köstlin’s argument has obscured European colonial and imperial experiences, which were, at least in the eyes of a folklorist, so long ago

¹ Konrad Köstlin, “Ethnographisches Wissen als Kulturtechnik” [Ethnographic knowledge as cultural technique], in *Ethnographisches Wissen. Zu einer Kulturtechnik der Moderne* [Ethnographic knowledge. On a cultural technique of modernity], eds. Konrad Köstlin and Herbert Nikitsch (Vienna: Selbstverlag des Instituts für Volkskunde, 1999), 9–30, here 10, 13–14.

that they could easily fall into oblivion. But it was precisely these experiences that made ethnographic categories largely impinge on state policies, at least in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and provided definite classification patterns according to which cultures of national as well as imperial state formations tried to describe others and themselves. Irrespective of the historical circumstances and protagonists by which these patterns have been developed, such ethnographic conceptions continuously determined the construction of identities and were circulating as a (so to speak) universal tool of distinctiveness between several agencies. Against this background, we need not be in complete agreement with Werner Petermann's provocative statement that ethnology represents "a bastard of Enlightenment and colonialism" to understand that ethnography mostly had the aura of being contaminated and sometimes even corrupted.²

This politicization of the ethnographic episteme is certainly an effect of its rather institutional and thus instrumental understanding, not least because imperial powers in particular were heavily engaged in a quasi-ethnographic engineering of their state affairs and also, to a certain degree, supported ethnography's academic development. Assuming that the outcomes of a nascent discipline should provide imperial authorities with new instruments of control, ethnography appears to be a significant part of the tool kit for the exercise of power. Even though it was primarily the centrifugal threat of national movements that motivated state intervention in these affairs, particularly in the late nineteenth century, the political instrumentalization of ethnic categories likewise gave imperial rulership the opportunity to appear as an omnipotent power in the peripheries.

Due to Moscow's steady expansion, starting in the late Middle Ages and reaching its first climax with the rapid conquest of nearly all Siberia during the seventeenth century, tsarist rule had to deal with increasing cultural, ethnic, and religious heterogeneity up to the twentieth century. Given the focus on the various strategies to cope with as well as to integrate the category of difference in official state policies, it is no coincidence that research often treated Russia's multitude in this power-oriented context of politics.³ In the face of the diverse peoples and their different

² Werner Petermann, *Die Geschichte der Ethnologie* [History of ethnology] (Wuppertal: Edition Trickster im Hammer-Verlag, 2004), 13.

³ See, for example, Catherine Black Clay, *Ethos and Empire: The Ethnographic Expedition of the Imperial Naval Ministry, 1855–1862* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1989); Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997);

political and social traditions, the empire's main task was to secure the viability of the multinational state. Rooted in the early modern age, the organization of imperial society by estates guaranteed the functioning of the Russian polity up to the collapse of the *ancien regime* in 1917, even though this vertical stratification pattern was gradually subverted by the categories of class and nation in the second half of the nineteenth century. But likewise, the cultural concepts of religion and ethnicity made difference horizontally visible, gradually hardening over the course of the nineteenth century. However, only the all-Russian census of 1897 gave a first official classification of the empire, listing 130 nationalities and identifying as many as 260 different languages.⁴ The emergence of the national

T.D. Solovei, *Ot "burzhuaznoi" etnologii k "sovetskoi" etnografii. Istoriia otechestvennoi etnologii pervoi treti XX veka* [From "bourgeois" ethnology to "Soviet" ethnography. History of Russian ethnology in the first third of the twentieth century] (Moscow: RAN, 1998); Nathaniel Knight, "Ethnicity, Nationality, and the Masses: *Narodnost'* and Modernity in Imperial Russia," in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, eds. David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 41–64; Charles Steinwedel, "To Make a Difference: The Category of Ethnicity in Late Imperial Russian Politics, 1861–1917," in *Russian Modernity*, 67–86; Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander Martin, eds., *Orientalism and Empire in Russia* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2006); David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴ Even the ninth revision of 1851, carried out by the statistician Peter von Köppen, was structured mainly by corporate categories. See Petr I. Keppen, *Deviatia reviziia. Izsledovanie o chisle zhitelei Rossii v 1851 godu* [Ninth revision. Inquiry of the population figure in Russia in 1851] (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia akademiia nauk, 1857). He mentions the ethnic category only once when turning to the allogenic inhabitants, known as the *inorodtsy*: see *ibid.*, 221. For more detailed information about the 1897 census, see the two volumes of Henning Bauer, Andreas Kappeler, and Brigitte Roth, eds., *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897* [The nationalities of the Russian Empire in the census of 1897] (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1991). See also Darius Staliūnas, "National Census in the Service of the Russian Empire: The Western Borderlands in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, 1830–1870," in *Defining Self: Essays on Emergent Identities in Russia: Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Studia Fennica Ethnologica, 10), ed. Michael Branch (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2009), 435–448. For the Soviet period, see Juliette Cadiot, "Les relations entre le centre et les régions en URSS à travers les débats sur les nationalités dans le recensement de 1926," *Cahiers du monde russe* 38, no. 4 (October–December 1997): 601–616.

idea in the nineteenth century finally led to the continuous involvement of the imperial state in ethnographic differentiation on that level. Petersburg's attempt to create a nationalized empire by a policy of Russification in the second half of the nineteenth century showed that the ethnic argument had conspicuously intruded into the general alignment of imperial policy. Its consequences, though, materialized in the national movements erupting at the fringes of the empire in the Revolution of 1905 and challenging—at least for a while—the tradition of imperial-autocratic rulership. Especially for the late tsarist period, alongside distinctions such as religious confession, economic stage, degree of civilization, or infrastructural relevance, ethnicity in particular was largely used as a political instrument for branding intra-imperial difference.

While ethnic differentiation gained ground over the course of the nineteenth century and in some regions emerged in colonial conditions, the October Revolution marked a strict departure to this policy. The Bolsheviks hurried to renounce the “imperialistic” tsarist approach to nationalities. After the liberals of the February Revolution declared all Russian subjects to be free and equal citizens regardless of their religious, ethnic, or racial backgrounds, the Bolsheviks introduced a policy of increased universalism immediately upon their seizure of power in October 1917, advocating the Marxist evolutionary model of change. The Bolsheviks, too, sought to unite all citizens irrespective of their origins, but this time under the umbrella of socialism and classless utopia. Whereas imperial rulers never really succeeded in incorporating multiethnicity—even though it was constantly confronted with it—as a coherent factor into an official policy, the Soviet regime, conversely, developed a clear concept of nationality precisely because it wanted to overcome it.⁵ If the present was characterized by ethnic difference, which still carried the imperial burden of an implicit civilizing gradient, the socialist future would instead come up with universal features of non-discrimination covering all national individualities and provide all elements of society with the most powerful cohesion. But unlike tsarist policy, which emphasized (and strengthened) heterogeneity, the Soviets, implying a directional course of

⁵ Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 414–452; Ronald Grigor Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, ‘National’ Identity, and Theories of Empire,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, eds. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23–66.

history with the Communist Party at the wheel, sought, as Francine Hirsch has aptly put it, the “conquest of difference.”⁶

With the particular focus on knowledge, the contributions of this volume now attempt a different approach to the ethnographic complex. In identifying ethnographic knowledge as a genuine cultural technique, Köstlin, the aforementioned German folklorist, made an important point at a time when knowledge as such represented no research paradigm in its own right in either the ethnographers’ or the anthropologists’ field of study, let alone among the historians. For understanding knowledge explicitly as a technique refers not only to the major importance of its scientific outcomes, manifestations, and applications—a commonplace—but also includes its very fabrication, as well as its specific conditions when being generated and validated.⁷ Knowledge as technique is thus a cultural resource that itself is subjected to historical circumstances. Meanwhile the research situation has changed, and many works have appeared dealing with the specific conditions of production, development, and implementation of knowledge in historical societies.⁸ Thus, taking account of these

⁶ Francine Hirsch, “State and Evolution: Ethnographic Knowledge, Economic Expediency, and the Making of the USSR, 1917–1924,” in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, eds. Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remnev (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 139–165, here 139; Adeeb Khalid, “The Soviet Union as an Imperial Formation: A View from Central Asia,” in *Imperial Formations*, eds. Ann Laura Stoler, Carol McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 113–139, here 120.

⁷ See Karin Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Steven Shapin, “The Sciences of Subjectivity,” *Social Studies of Science* 42, no. 2 (April 2012): 170–184.

⁸ In ethnography first attempts were partly undertaken by George W. Stocking, ed., *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991). For the historians it is still a fairly new challenge to address a history of knowledge in general. See, for example, Patrick O’Brien, “Historical Foundations for a Global Perspective on the Emergence of a Western European Regime for the Discovery, Development, and Diffusion of Useful and Reliable Knowledge,” *Journal of Global History* 8, no. 1 (March 2013): 1–24; Ian Inkster, “Potentially Global: ‘Useful and Reliable Knowledge’ and Material Progress in Europe, 1474–1914,” *International History Review* 28, no. 2 (June 2006): 237–286; Jakob Vogel, “Von der Wissenschafts- zur Wissensgeschichte. Für eine Historisierung der ‘Wissensgesellschaft’” [From the history of science to the history of knowledge. Historicizing the “knowledge society”], *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 30, no. 4 (2004): 639–660; Peter Becker and William Clark, eds., *Little Tools of Knowledge: Historical Essays on Academic and Bureaucratic Practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); particularly Peter Burke’s innovative as well as controversial book, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000) and his recently published second volume, *A Social History of*

general trends, we address ethnographic knowledge as a prism through which to look at Russian history. As a result new opportunities open up for comprehending complex and multilayered processes that influenced the contemporaries' abilities to grasp cultural difference, going beyond concepts of power-motivated, institutional, or scientific developments of Russian ethnography. Of course, the involvement of state control in ethnographic matters was out of the question, but even though their political instrumentalization certainly was considerable, it was still one possible path ethnographic knowledge could take. Most of the works focusing on this intersection have therefore mainly considered the political consequences of implementing ethnic categories, as was briefly explained above. But there are fewer historical studies for Russia dealing with the various epistemic situations as well as environments in which ethnographic categories had been modeled and in which the premises were possibly prepared for their broader use. That means we still do not know how ethnographic knowledge as such was identified, approved, and, above all, processed to eventually support the contemporaries in describing the others and themselves.⁹ Even in the cases of state interference, little

Knowledge: Volume 2: From the Encyclopédie to Wikipedia (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012). For further reading, see Peter Collin and Thomas Horstmann, eds., *Das Wissen des Staates. Geschichte, Theorie und Praxis* [The knowledge of the state. History, theory, practice] (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004); Arndt Brendecke, *Imperium und Empirie. Funktionen des Wissens in der spanischen Kolonialherrschaft* [Empire and empiricism. Functions of knowledge during Spanish colonial rule] (Cologne: Böhlau, 2009); Marian Füssel, "Auf dem Weg zur Wissensgesellschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Kultur des Wissens in der Frühen Neuzeit" [On the way to knowledge society. New research on the culture of knowledge in the early modern age], *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 34, no. 2 (2007): 273–289; Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Was kann die Geschichtswissenschaft vom Wissen wissen?" [What can history know of knowledge?], in *Geschichte(n) der Wirklichkeit. Beiträge zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte des Wissens* [History(ies) of reality. Contributions to the social and cultural history of knowledge], ed. Achim Landwehr (Augsburg: Wißner, 2002), 31–60; Donald R. Kelley, ed., *History and the Disciplines: The Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997). Focusing on the Soviet and post-Soviet case, see Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*; Susan Gross Solomon, "Circulation of Knowledge and the Russian Locale," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 9–26.

⁹ The attempts of the researchers associated with the journal *Ab Imperio* to describe the peculiarity of each imperial situation by considering both the very specific language used by the protagonists involved and the specific historical circumstances are partly comparable to our approach. See the inspiring volume of Ilya Gerasimov, Jan Kusber, and Alexander Semyonov, eds., *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

attention has been directed to the different epistemic conditions in which the ethnic categories appeared.¹⁰ The idea of this volume is therefore to step back, to take into consideration precisely these processes and understand the very generation of ethnographic knowledge, the channels of its circulation, and the various protagonists involved in these practices. In particular, we want to reveal the manifestations in which ethnographic knowledge took shape.

Turning to knowledge history principally means measuring specific spaces in which more or less decisive categories, labels, arguments, and explanations for self-description as well as self-recognition could emerge and be negotiated. So in picking up the knowledge concept for Russian history, the contributions do certainly not attempt to write a comprehensive history of Russian ethnography. It is not our intention to retrace the ways of essentialization, nationalization, and ideologization of ethnographic arguments in the course of imperial and Soviet history. Instead, we try to look into the different milieus preparing and providing us with apparently secured knowledge, creating the material as well as ideological premises for the use of later consolidated concepts of ethnographic knowledge, and in particular, we want to know how and where this happened. In other words, the contributions attempt to depict some presuppositions that—each in its own way—were decisive for developing formations of difference. But at the same time it is obvious that these presuppositions under which knowledge was generated themselves changed and were similarly contingent upon the historical context in which they arose and became possible. Knowledge, both in its production and in its outcome, is fluid, and it is the historical reflection on precisely this fluidity that the contributions try to capture.

Hence to us addressing knowledge history has at least a fourfold meaning. First, it presumes that knowledge is alterable and thus, as we have already said, subjected to the general framework in which it is produced. The social status of the scientist, the scientific culture he is part of, but also the specific societal setting in which this scientific culture is embedded, encourage or discourage, support or disapprove, and finally, establish

¹⁰ As would seem natural, the most cited example is that of statistics; see Alain Blum, *L'anarchie bureaucratique. Pouvoir et statistique sous Staline* (Paris: Édition la Découverte, 2003). More generally, see also Benjamin Steiner, *Die Ordnung der Geschichte. Historische Tabellenwerke in der Frühen Neuzeit* [The order of history. Historical charts in the early modern age] (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008); Alain Desrosières, *La politique des grands nombres. Histoire de la raison statistique* (Paris: Édition la Découverte, 1993).

or neglect the importance of it.¹¹ This is why knowledge has to be conceived as being in a perpetually instable and similarly multi-determined condition. From this follows that, second, knowledge in its social existence is highly dependent on its dissemination, because only its spreading and its public acceptance authorizes knowledge as such. To be validated it has to circulate either within one social or professional caste or between several of them, but by injecting specific knowledge into separate discourses it is processed, applied, incorporated, and transformed differently. Its power as an approved tool of recognition thus relies on its broader practice, which in turn corroborates its continuous flexibility, just as it guarantees its connectivity. Third, the development of knowledge's connectivity and its related knowledge cultures does not follow a historical trail of allegedly ascending rationality. As it were, its constructivist character actually prevents us from taking up a teleological view. Instead it emphasizes the historical simultaneity of specific knowledge structures and even of their contingency. This circumstance of multiplicity, however, certainly does not justify an arbitrariness in historical processes that could be used as a methodical shield to hide behind. Instead, it sensitizes us to look for specific situations, interrelate them, and give them an alternative narrative, and not to primarily ascertain an apparently all-embracing leit-motif in history.¹² And fourth, emerging from this there is a plurality of knowledge. True, particularly in modern societies its academic appearance is certainly most important since it has become common—at least in the last three centuries—for the public to turn to scientific expertise furnished with objectivity in order to provide a somewhat reliable and medium-term value orientation.¹³ But with the rehabilitation of local knowledge, that is,

¹¹ Still intriguing is Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994). With regard to the political framework affecting the general organization of knowledge, see Jean-Luc Chappey, "Héritages républicains et résistances à 'l'organisation impériale des savoirs,'" *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 346 (October–December 2006): 97–120. For late imperial Russia, see Elizabeth A. Hachten, "In Service to Science and Society: Scientists and the Public in Late-Nineteenth-Century Russia," *Osiris* 17 (2002): 171–209.

¹² This contingency and non-linearity of the past has only scarcely left its imprints on the narration about the past. See the instructive essay by Mads Mordshorst, "From Counterfactual History to Counter-Narrative History," *Management and Organizational History* 3, no. 1 (February 2008): 5–26. I am grateful to Felix Heinert for drawing my attention to this article.

¹³ For a fragmentation into several objectivity structures, see Lorraine Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," *Social Studies of Science* 22, no. 4 (1992): 597–618; Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

knowledge cultivated and passed on, for example, by artisans, peasants, bureaucrats and so on, we have to envisage different and occasionally competing knowledge cultures. To give one example, Russian village healers competed with academic medicine up to the twentieth century, so that the physicians trained in modern methods partly had to adopt strategies of the “witches” to become more attractive, particularly to the rural clientele.¹⁴ Medical enlightenment was therefore not necessarily a victory of progressive Western medical rationality but a specific blend of modern and traditional knowledge repositories.

Taking account of these four epistemic pillars, the present contributions do not approach ethnography primarily as a tool of state engineering but instead use it, as the anthropologist Harry F. Wolcott put it recently, as a way of seeing.¹⁵ In adopting Wolcott’s reflexive stance to describe the ethnography of the past by including one’s own past, to frame ethnography as being informed by the practice of a kind of participant observation, by one’s very experience as well as inquiry, we want to transfer this structural interplay between ethnographic subject and object to the various historical situations in which ethnographic knowledge itself has taken specific shapes. Alexis Hofmeister’s comparative analysis of British and Russian imperial-scientific cultures in the nineteenth century already shows that even within one single reference system—science—with the development of anthropology in Britain and ethnography in Russia, knowledge was obviously realized in distinct ways concerning both its very concept and scientific methods. But these different shapes do not only pertain to different scientific theories; they also designate different cultural conceptualizations, that is, *formats* of knowledge such as the written word, speech, songs, and pictorial or material representations. This also means that the emergence of the specific shapes discussed in detail below was not only characteristic of the political and intellectual environments in which they arose, but that these particular shapes of ethnographic knowledge also reflected back—as a specific materialization and thus as a kind of epistemic instruction, they in turn impinged on the mind-set of the historical actors and influenced how to perceive, process, and handle it. To best capture the diverse contexts that reveal the specific features of formation, formats, processing, and usage of ethnographic

¹⁴ See Samuel C. Ramer, “Traditional Healers and Peasant Culture in Russia 1861–1917,” in *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800–1921*, eds. Esther Kingston-Mann and Timothy Mixer (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), 207–232.

¹⁵ Harry F. Wolcott, *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 1999).

knowledge, we have divided the volume into three conceptual approaches, first addressing paradigms, then representations, and finally peoples.

Paradigms

The paradigmatic aspect of the first part picks up the issue tackled by Alexis Hofmeister. It focuses on the institutional hardening of ethnographic knowledge and especially deals with the difficulties of its scientification, with the ideological uncertainties emerging from this process of gaining scientific independence, and also with ethnography's interplay with other contiguous disciplines, which had an impact not only on the formulation of the ethnographic object itself but also on the ethnographers' self-conception. After the participants in the eighteenth century's large-scale expeditions had already integrated ethnographic descriptions into the official body of scientific data about the empire, it was the Rumiantsev circle in the early nineteenth century that first attempted to conduct a particularly ethnographic study of Russia.¹⁶ The actual professions of its members, however—the circle consisted mainly of historians, geographers, and linguists—not only pointed to the specific intellectual milieu in which ethnographic knowledge was primarily produced at that stage, but also heralded the crossroads ethnography would reach when defining itself as an autonomous science in the mid-nineteenth century. It was the Imperial Russian Geographical Society where the first consistent scientific ethnographic program was elaborated, and it was originally a literary critic (Nikolai Nadezhdin) who headed the Society's ethnographic division in its initial phase for a considerable time. So the use of largely geographical as well as philological criteria to outline a genuinely ethnographic agenda was the major reason, as Alexei Elfimov shows, that ethnography perceived itself as belonging to the humanities. This conclusion, however, was not without consequences. With Nadezhdin's ideological decision to set a clearly Russophile research objective, taking nation units as a basic principle, ethnography developed in the second half of the nineteenth century into a science that operated basically descriptively and cumulatively. This approach, though, made itself felt on a broader scale and manifested itself in epistemic shifts on the late imperial scientific

¹⁶ E.A. Barysheva, "Rumiantsevskii kruzhok i stanovlenie etnograficheskoi nauki v Rossii" [The Rumiantsev circle and the establishment of ethnographic science in Russia], *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* 3 (1994): 90–104.

landscape. Out of ethnography's apparent lack of analytical benefit in referring mainly to the elusive categories of *narod* (people) and *narodnost* (nationality), it was the representatives of physical anthropology who introduced the concept of race in order to grasp difference with verifiable and thus seemingly hard scientific facts. Marina Mogilner depicts in detail the discussions set off by the racial question evolving from physical anthropology's emancipation process since the mid-nineteenth century and shows how these discussions even turned into a fundamental controversy. In the eyes of anthropologists, ethnography was occupied with elaborating differences largely by making use of ethnic differentiations and by merely relying on cultural constructions, whereas anthropology employed objective physical categories that were apparently not contaminated by imagined presuppositions and thus guaranteed to conduct research on real scientific grounds. It is remarkable that the concept of "race" as it was developed by the pre-revolutionary anthropologists was also picked up by the liberal milieu who considered this notion a new manifestation of a universal language. They believed that taking a biological view would ultimately enable them to describe the Russian Empire as a modern state.

The persistence of ethnography's "negative" paradigm, however, is striking. It was not only that luminaries in the early twentieth century like Lev Shternberg complained about the lack of theory in Russian ethnography and even doubted its status as science. The paradigm's impact could also be felt to the present day, even though the self-definition of ethnography underwent a temporary but decisive change during the Soviet period. Its slow alienation from the humanities and gradual steering towards the social sciences was effected under the pressure of Marxist ideology which urged each discipline to provide itself a "real" scientific, that is thoroughly analytical, makeup to corroborate the ideological basis of the system. In putting the notion of *ethnos* at the center of ethnographic research, particularly from the 1960s on, ethnography started to adopt a vocabulary that obviously corresponded to ideological requirements by finally reshaping itself as a political science. But the shift back to the humanities after the collapse of the Soviet Union caused an immediate resurfacing from within of the old criticism that Russian ethnography again mostly appears not to be theoretical, that is, "scientific."

The very process of Marxist redefinition of ethnography could be seen when academicians set about writing national histories in the 1940s and 1950s. It is worth noting, though, that the concept of ethnogenesis that gained ground in that period and basically paved the way for ethnography's later turn to *ethnos* was realized not only by ethnographers, but also

by historians and archaeologists. Using the example of Central Asia and the writing of the multivolume *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*, Sergey Abashin traces the highly ideological discussions concerning how to explain the origins of the Uzbek people. Not surprisingly, what won out in the end was a Marrist version of ethnogenesis championed by the doyen of Soviet ethnography, Sergei P. Tolstov. He rejected unilinear histories ascribing to each people one ethnic root and instead advocated a historical intermingling of *ethnoses* and assumed constant ethnic interactions.¹⁷ Central Asian nations were formed only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and could not be traced back in history to discrete ethnic entities. Instead it was Soviet rule that finally was able to lay the foundations for the completion of the Uzbek people's national consolidation. But what is more noteworthy is that by portraying the multiple competing institutions, representatives, and approaches to writing Uzbek history, Abashin convincingly demonstrates that ethnography was more than a self-sufficient science system. Indeed, it represented, as he puts it, an open "autonomous zone" with its own logic. It was a set of different institutions and hierarchies, of rights and statuses. It was equally the container for individual identities of scholars adhering to different specializations, sometimes even outside of ethnography. Finally, it represented a discursive field in which it was discussed precisely what it meant to be labeled "ethnographic" and what problems, questions, vocabulary, and legitimations were necessary to do so. So drawing on the historical paradigm simultaneously gave ethnography and its advocates the possibility to unfold and situate ethnography in history.

Of course, the general background of twentieth-century intellectual developments was the alignment and coercion imposed on scientific thinking by the official dogma. This intrusion of Marxist ideology as superstructure into ethnography is tackled by Sergei Alymov. It has been claimed that ethnography experienced a rapid degeneration when the Bolsheviks took it over.¹⁸ Sergei Alymov, however, in following the criticisms of Francine Hirsch, challenges this hypothesis by deliberately as-

¹⁷ Yuri Slezkine, "N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 826–862. See also Marlène Laruelle, "The Concept of Ethnogenesis in Central Asia: Political Context and Institutional Mediators (1940–1950)," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 169–189.

¹⁸ Yuri Slezkine, "The Fall of Soviet Ethnography, 1928–38," *Current Anthropology* 32, no. 4 (August–October 1991): 476–484.

suming an “insider” perspective.¹⁹ Similar to Abashin’s approach, Alymov chooses both a biographical and generational avenue to elucidate the conversion of the early Soviet ethnographers to Marxism, explains their reasons, and outlines the outcomes of this intellectual shift in their works. Reflecting the politically motivated abandonment of a “bourgeois” attitude to science, the converts all soon showed a general distrust both of an essentializing concept of *ethnos* and of the relativistic notion of culture. Irrespective of the diverse interferences, Alymov shows that on the whole, the change to a Marxist-sociological approach to ethnography cannot solely be interpreted as a shift to ossified teleological theory. In light of the different biographies, it seems more likely that this process was a re-invention of ethnography. Alymov’s main argument is that more than a few of the Marxist ethnographers were not simply legitimizing the Party line with their research but actually strove to generally take part in Stalin’s great modernization project. Some maintain that the specific paradigm elaborated in this early phase, which highlighted the primacy of clan, kinship, and commune as a basic economic unit of “primitive societies,” represented only a blend of “old-fashioned” evolutionism with Friedrich Engels’s and Lewis H. Morgan’s concept of family. Nonetheless, it persisted until the end of the Soviet Union.²⁰

Representations

The second part attempts to broaden the understanding of knowledge so that our focus is not only on knowledge disciplines, as was the case in the previous chapter, but on knowledge formats, with particular attention to the variety of specific representations and the inherent logics in which ethnographic knowledge manifested itself.²¹ Even the format of the

¹⁹ Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*.

²⁰ On the evolutionist reading of late imperial ethnography, see Bruce Grant, “Empire and Savagery: The Politics of Primitivism in Late Imperial Russia,” in *Russia’s Orient*, eds. Brower and Lazzerini, 292–310. Concerning the self-ascribed high status of ethnography in the late Soviet period, see Iu. V. Bromlei and M.V. Kriukov, “Etnografiia. Mesto v sisteme nauk, shkoly, metody” [Ethnography. Place in the system of sciences, schools, and methods], *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 3 (1987): 45–60. For the argument defending a “rich intellectual legacy” for the Soviet period, see B.N. Basilov, “Traditsii otechestvennoi etnografii” [Traditions of national ethnography], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1998): 18–45.

²¹ We adopt the concept of “format” from a recent German publication on that topic. See Ina Dietzsch, Wolfgang Kaschuba, and Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz, eds., *Horizonte*

written word actually contains, aside from scientific texts, a range of further subdivisions in which knowledge could materialize and be processed differently, such as in novels, school books, or travel guides, not least because each addressed a specific public. But furthermore, there are numerous other knowledge formats: pictures, maps, photographs, songs, expeditions, museums, and exhibitions. Not only do they all represent a broader array of platforms on which ethnographic knowledge was negotiated, elaborated, and disseminated, but the formats themselves also produced a unique epistemological as well as material logic and correspondingly affected the further processing, comprehension, and assessment of ethnography's content.²² A quite illustrative case in point for an intrinsic logic is photography. This new and, as it were, shocking means of grasping reality immediately attracted the ethnographers' attention. It was rapidly integrated into ethnographic work by the Imperial Geographical Society at a time when it was still highly contested as a new art form. In the 1850s Nikolai I. Vtorov used this medium in his fieldwork on the popular customs in the *guberniia* of Voronezh and even initiated the publication of a photo album. The success story of the ethnographic photograph seemed unstoppable—the all-Russian ethnographic exposition in Moscow in 1867 already showed more than 2,000 pictures, and five years later the Imperial Geographical Society officially distinguished between physiognomic and ethnographic photographs. And at the same time a photo album of Turkestan was published depicting the rites, ceremonies, and customs of the region. Right away the famous literary critic Vladimir V. Stasov expressed his enthusiasm for this new kind of grasping difference. Heretofore, he said, this compilation would represent the very first systematic and thorough depiction of a part of the Russian Empire.²³ Stasov's ex-

ethnografischen Wissens. Eine Bestandsaufnahme [Horizons of ethnographic knowledge. A survey] (Cologne: Böhlau, 2009), esp. 7–15.

²² Media and literary theory have long since pointed to the significance of the material storage medium as a necessary intermediary to express meaning in general. This is most provocatively contended by Friedrich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990).

²³ *Turkestarskii al'bom, po raspriazheniiu Turkestarskogo general-gubernatora General-ad"iutanta K. P. fon Kaufmana* [Turkestars album, by order of the Turkestars general-governor adjutant general K.P. von Kaufmann] (Tashkent, 1871–1872); Margaret Dikovitskaya, "Central Asia in Early Photographs: Colonial Attitudes and Visual Culture," in *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia*, ed. Tomohiko Uyama (Hokkaido: Slavic Research Center, 2007), 99–136; Elena Barkhatova, "Realism and Document: Photography as Fact," in *Photography in Russia, 1840–1940: Published to Coincide with the Touring Exhibition "Photography in Russia 1840–1940" Organised by the*

citement was definitely due to the persuasive power the new medium had by seeming to function as a means of immediate description. Yet in fact, not only did the photograph obscure historical development, but its statement also comprised specific aesthetic patterns, was shaped by general pictorial traditions, and, of course, also drew on cultural concepts of hegemony. In addressing the “multimedia presentation” of ethnographic knowledge in the early modern age, Maike Sach examines the development and usage of pictorial representations in maps as well as in the accounts produced in the course of the great eighteenth-century expeditions. She points out that the main feature of distinction already observable in the sixteenth-century maps largely consisted of portraying the costumes and garments of the different tribes, and this pictorial strategy remained significant and culturally meaningful for depicting otherness up to the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, as eighteenth-century developments show, the figurative documentation of ethnographic diversity was connected both with the requirements of an exact science obliging the researchers to depict truthfully what they had seen and with the logics of the medium itself. In particular, the making of the illustrations of Chappe d’Auteroche’s *Voyage en Sibérie*, which referred to Stepan P. Krasheninnikov’s famous account that was published not long before, reveal how the conventions of traditional artistic education now influenced how ethnographic issues were represented and let in the powerful and long-lasting concept of the “noble savage.”

Similarly to pictorial processing, the museum embodies another cultural agency that has its own techniques of organizing and processing ethnographic knowledge specifically. It is in particular the haptic presence of the collections and their display that ultimately align all museum activities. Using the example of the establishment of the Russian Museum’s ethnographic section, Roland Cvetkovski explicates for the pre-revolutionary period the several interfaces characterizing the functioning of an ethnographic museum within an imperial context. He elaborates that it is the interplay between the individual professional backgrounds of the museum-makers, their colonial and semi-colonial concepts, their strategies of acquiring and displaying museum objects, and finally, the very reception of the exhibition that constitutes the complexity of the museum machinery, refusing to convey one single narrative. The endeavors to conceive of the Russian Empire as a story of otherness with the Russian

people as a point of reference failed, particularly because each of the museum protagonists presupposed that the exhibited objects were unambiguous in their symbolic content and as legible as textbooks. Thus the ambitious project to entirely translate imperial concepts into the museum room was actually doomed from the start. It was instead the very ensemble consisting of the diverse actors connected with the museum and the museum techniques themselves that together made up the specific museum parlance. The ethnographic museum, albeit in the Soviet period, also provides one of the settings that is addressed by Catriona Kelly in the context of Russian society's discovery of children. It was only at the end of nineteenth century that children were perceived as important social as well as cultural actors, and ethnography was used as a vessel for socializing them. Kelly shows how songs, rhymes, and riddles instructed children in how to perceive their environment, but how at the same time they became objects of ethnographic research themselves. Particularly under the Soviet regime, when children's education turned into a policed program of appropriating the Soviet lifestyle, a dual role was conceived for them. As pupils they had to learn what, for example, a new peasant life exactly meant and how it should develop under the new circumstances. On the other hand, they were encouraged to conduct ethnographic research on their own in the villages or districts, so that eventually the very practice of excursions—the classical Soviet topos for successful collective educational work—became an effective means of turning children into both the object and subject of ethnography. With the politically motivated shift to folklore in the 1930s, the previous discussions about the improvement of village life abruptly gave way to mere affirmation of official policy, a shift that could also be felt in the classrooms. Instead of thinking critically about the enhancement of mostly poor life conditions, children now had to study folklore, so that proverbs, tales, or ditties were widely cited in readers for elementary schools, a practice that continued into the post-Soviet era. Such promotion of a folkloristic Soviet patriotism was particularly prominent in the State Museum of Ethnography, which, in the course of reconstruction after World War II, increasingly focused on children as its target audience. The impact of the museum's presentation of folklife conceived particularly for children was, as Kelly observes, enduring.

Peoples

And finally, the third part refers to the very practice of ethnography itself and its cultural modeling of peoples, its creating of ethnic entities, and its national structuring of imperial space. It is here that ethnographic knowledge is most obviously superimposed by a political discourse. Specifying ethnic and national affiliations within given territories meant both mapping political hierarchies and establishing historical path dependencies.²⁴ Older approaches in imperial historiography often simplified these intra-imperial power relations and authority shifts. Many works assumed a historically generated binarity between metropole and peripheries manifesting itself in a clearly defined cultural-spatial gradient. In that assumption they had obviously adopted the unidirectional conceptions mostly in terms of a *mission civilisatrice* that had previously been advocated by many of those in the imperial elite, such as the statistician and geographer Konstantin I. Arsen'ev (1789–1865). He contended in the mid-nineteenth century that the core area of Russia was not only the true fatherland of the Russian people, but the very heart of the empire as such. All wealth emanated from it, and it was the guarantee of Russia's spatial, cultural, and economic indivisibility.²⁵ Such national-romantic and politically affirmative attitudes reflected a firm belief in—or rather hope for—the omnipotence of the imperial state to establish unambiguous political dependencies and thus to materialize the flowing of power from the center to the fringes.²⁶ However, under the influence of post-colonial studies, what is known as the “new imperial history” has formed and decisively challenged this simplistic interpretation.²⁷ Instead of mostly addressing

²⁴ An early and impressive example of this is A.N. Pypin, *Istoriia russkoi etnografii* [History of Russian ethnography], 4 vols. (St. Petersburg: Stasiulevich, 1890–1892). See also V.I. Kozlov, “Etnos i territorii,” *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 6 (November–December 1971): 89–100.

²⁵ Leonid Gorizontov, “The ‘Great Circle’ of Interior Russia: Representations of the Imperial Center in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in *Russian Empire*, 67–93; for Arsen'ev, see 72–73.

²⁶ On the dynamics of the relationship between metropole and periphery in comparative view, see Andreas Kappeler, “Tsentr i elity periferii v gabsburgskoi, rossiiskoi i osmanskoi imperiakh (1700–1918 gg.)” [Center and elites in the peripheries of the Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman empires, 1700–1918], *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2007): 17–58. See also Jeff Sahadeo, “The Search for the Russian Nation: Notes from the Periphery,” *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 31, no. 1–2 (2004): 113–125.

²⁷ A summary of the discussion can be found in Dane Kennedy, “Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24, no. 3

state-bound agencies, the new imperial history turns to the different imperial experiences, refusing to generalize them within a meta-concept of empire.²⁸ Taking the different individuals and their differing self-conceptions in an imperial context seriously, the followers of this recent trend ultimately tore down the paradigm of a clearly defined metropole/periphery relationship in favor of a concept that was determined both by the individuals' backgrounds and intentions and by the very places in which they acted.²⁹ The focus on the different experiences thus offers the opportunity to break the iron cage of the empire's state-centered framing and instead to describe it as a set of different imperial situations.³⁰ In our case the local circumstances were crucial for producing ethnographic knowledge, and the regional, territorially bound agencies took on an active role in creating the multiethnic empire.³¹ Multinational environments necessarily evoked heterogeneous knowledge cultures and thus different ethnographic processing strategies. The forging of imperial fantasies and the very realization of these ideas were thus highly dependent on their specific contexts, which is why empire in general has to be understood as a multidimensional work in progress.

This, however, is not to deny the influence of tsarist central authority on the territorial as well as conceptual conquest of the periphery. In the nineteenth-century Caucasus we have, as Christian Dettmering shows

(1996): 345–363; Catherine Hall, "Introduction: Thinking the Postcolonial, Thinking the Empire," in *Cultures of Empire: A Reader; Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Catherine Hall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1–36.

²⁸ Ilya Gerasimov et al., "New Imperial History and the Challenges of Empire," in *Empire Speaks Out*, 3–32; David Lambert and Alan Lester, "Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects," in *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. David Lambert and Alan Lester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–31.

²⁹ For the example of producing literature, see Harsha Ram and Zaza Shatirishvili, "Romantic Topography and the Dilemma of Empire: The Caucasus in the Dialogue of Georgian and Russian Poetry," *Russian Review* 63 (January 2004): 1–25.

³⁰ The integration of territorial and imperial situations, respectively, into the research design has been called for by Jane Burbank and Mark von Hagen, "Coming into Territory: Uncertainty and Empire," in *Russian Empire*, 1–29; and Aleksei Miller, "Between Local and Inter-Imperial: Russian Imperial History in Search of Scope and Paradigm," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 7–26.

³¹ Willard Sunderland, "An Empire of Peasants: Empire-Building, Interethnic Interaction, and Ethnic Stereotyping in the Rural World of the Russian Empire, 1800–1850s," in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 174–198.

with the Chechen and Ingush case, a close connection between state intentions and the generation of ethnographic knowledge. The subjugation of the southern borderlands went hand in hand with the ethnographic conceptualization of the region that was undertaken by the military on the spot.³² The alignment of the peoples' ethnographic descriptions (which naturally changed over time) with imperial policy took hold in the general image of the region and reveals the persisting historical significance of their mutual interaction.³³ But likewise the center's conceptual superimposition easily turned into a process of appropriation and served as an identification pattern for the peripheral objects themselves. This instrumentalization and, in fact, imperial circulation of ethnographic ascriptions was the case with the Jewish community of the Karaites settling in the Crimea. Mikhail Kizilov explains how they tried to foster an imposed ethnic identity by corroborating it with ethnographic arguments after Karaism was officially recognized as a religion separate from Judaism in 1837. Thus Abraham Firkovich (1786–1874) embarked on archaeological and philological investigations to bolster his community's claim of being the older and more authentic form of Judaism. He collected any kind of evidence he could find of early Karaite presence on their territory, and to support the community's claim he even resorted to manipulating findings. Regionally determined ethnographic features such as custom, language, and architecture were thus transformed into general markers of distinction between Rabbanite and Karaite Jews to buttress the Karaites' exclusive position within the imperial union.³⁴

On the other hand, the producers of ethnographic knowledge on the margins could also act without identifying themselves with the interests of

³² For another example, see D. Iu. Arapov, "Etnokonfessional'nyi faktor v tsentral'noi azii v otsenke russkikh voennykh issledovatelei. XIX–XX vv." [The ethno-confessional factor in Central Asia in the judgment of military researchers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries], *Vostok* 3 (2003): 86–90.

³³ See also Austin Lee Jersild, "Ethnic Modernity and the Russian Empire: Russian Ethnographers and Caucasian Mountaineers," *Nationalities Papers* 24, no. 4 (1996): 641–648.

³⁴ On Jewish ethnography in general, see Sergei Kan, *Lev Shternberg: Anthropologist, Russian Socialist, Jewish Activist* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Deborah Yalen, "Documenting the 'New Red Kasrilevke': Shtetl Ethnography as Revolutionary Narrative," *East European Jewish Affairs* 37, no. 3 (2007): 353–375; Simon Rabinovitch, "Positivism, Populism and Politics: The Intellectual Foundations of Jewish Ethnography in Late Imperial Russia," *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2005): 227–256. For the other way round, see, for example, Jeffrey Veidlinger, "The Historical and Ethnographic Construction of Russian Jewry," *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2003): 165–184.

the imperial center or even in its absence. In his contribution Sergey Glebov traces the construction of Siberia, claiming that the connection to the center in generating and processing ethnographic knowledge was loose at best. He refers to four sets of participants: the German explorers who thoroughly catalogued Siberia in the eighteenth century, the nineteenth-century Siberian regionalists, the political exiles of the large-scale Sibiriakov expedition, and the exceptional ethnographer-novelist Wacław Sieroszewski at the end of the nineteenth century. Glebov shows convincingly how these different participants conceived of Siberian society in terms of ethnographic and political categories and that these conceptions did not coincide with—and even clashed with—the images of the metropole. Political power and the production of ethnographic knowledge were obviously not connected in the Siberian case but, on the contrary, separated by a yawning gap, which emphasizes once more the productivity of the concept of approaching imperial history by imperial situations. This is also proven by the example of Ukraine examined by Angela Rustemeyer. In late imperial Russia and the early Soviet period in particular, folkloristic studies as a vehicle for identity-building were at the heart of Ukrainian ethnography.³⁵ Rustemeyer looks at the borrowings of early Soviet folklore studies from pre-revolutionary Ukrainian ethnography and focuses on the mutual interference of categories such as place, nation, and class, heralding the advent of modernity. However, eschewing the biographical approach to Ukrainian ethnography, she instead analyzes some aspects of folk belief and the attempts to adjust these pre-revolutionary findings to the new materialistic and atheist ideology.³⁶ Notwithstanding that the Ukrainian ethnographic works were written with clear anti-colonial and national intent against imperial authority, it becomes evident that Ukrainian ethnography could not be entirely absorbed by Soviet ethnography and

³⁵ For the beginnings, see Catherine B. Clay, "From Savage Ukrainian Steppe to Quiet Russian Field: Ukrainian Ethnographers and Imperial Russia in the Reform Era," in *Ukrainian Past, Ukrainian Present*, ed. Bohdan Krawchenko (London: Houndmills, 1993), 18–34; Thomas Prymak, "Mykola Kostomarov and East Slavic Ethnography in the Nineteenth Century," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 163–186. For general information on the development of folklore studies in Russia, see H.F. Vermeulen, "Proiskhozhdenie i institutsionalizatsiia poniatiia 'Völkerkunde' (1771–1843)" [Origin and institutionalization of the concept of *Völkerkunde* (1771–1843)], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 4 (1994): 101–109.

³⁶ For a general Soviet assessment, see K.V. Chistov, "O vzaimootnoshenii fol'kloristiki i etnografii" [On the interrelation between folklore studies and ethnography], *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 5 (September–October 1971): 17–24.

fit into official Soviet nationality policy. Especially when compared to Polish interwar folklore studies, it is striking to observe the contradictory assessments of ethnic diversity for that region. Polish as well as Soviet folklorists simultaneously utilized both backwardness and modernity to translate ethnographic-folkloristic findings into ideologically compatible expressions.

* * *

In ascertaining the particular circumstances of producing and approving knowledge, the historian inevitably marks out the horizon of the era under study. He or she delves into the mindset of the protagonists to understand the factual possibilities they saw for their actions, as well as to identify the specific knowledge repositories they were referring to. And it is the indissoluble connection of this particular historical horizon with the protagonists' scope of action that reveals to us how people produced significance and how they gave their reality a certain meaning. Such a quasi-empathy with the contemporaries obviously traces how they interpreted the situations they were involved in. But it would be merely pouring old wine into new bottles if the benefit of using knowledge as a historical category amounted to nothing more than becoming immersed in the past. As opposed to older historiographical traditions, it is useful to envision that we always have to consider the plurality of knowledge and knowledge cultures, respectively. In this way we can simultaneously observe the contemporaries' different approaches to reality according to the specific criteria of each knowledge milieu. From this emerges a rather competitive situation, or, more realistically, we have a game of differences, a continuous interrelation of different contexts and levels. The historian thus has to direct his attention to the contact zones of these knowledge areas, to their interferences and contaminations, to their exclusive as well as inclusive character and to their intrinsic developments depending on their specific formats.

Moreover, after accepting the historical mutability of knowledge and even of objectivity, the researcher finds himself becoming an object, too, in this huge process of knowledge manifestations. His scientific methods to reconstruct the past were themselves underlying the conditions of his own knowledge culture; that is, giving priority to knowledge as an object of study means emphasizing the self-reflection both of the individual conducting research and the society he is part of. The awareness that historicizing knowledge lays open the constructivist character of our current

knowledge on which we are unavoidably thrown back represents not only a tribute to historical contingency, but an imperative to reflect the fluid presuppositions of our horizons themselves.³⁷ Inasmuch as knowledge history obviously affects a de-hierarchization of historiography, just as it tends to a de-centering of history itself, it also complies with the modernistic attitude of fragmentation. But given that it comprises both the subject and the object of research, knowledge history in turn reflects the very conditions of coherence itself.

³⁷ The call for the necessary self-reflexivity of society in this knowledge context was already formulated in sociology some twenty years ago. See Niklas Luhmann, *Die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft* [The science of society] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 173–174.

Imperial Case Studies: Russian and British Ethnographic Theory

Alexis Hofmeister

The European attention to groups, classified as “others” in a horizontal sense of geography and culture as well as in a vertical sense of social customs and chronology, continuously increased since the Age of Discovery.¹ This particular fascination of the modern European self with the non-civilized Other first peaked during the Enlightenment, and despite various claims, it has not yet ended. It produced a vast amount of knowledge on traditional customs, religious beliefs, family relations, and everyday-life economics of almost every ethnic group on earth. Yet there is no accepted explanation or general theory for the explosion in quantity and quality of global ethnographic knowledge from the eighteenth century onwards. There is only a confusing picture of several concurrent models and concepts attempting to explain the historical causes of this ethnographic interest.² It will be argued here that to understand the history of the manifold

¹ T. Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1984).

² For this critique: Jürgen Osterhammel, “Distanzerfahrung. Darstellungsweisen des Fremden im 18. Jahrhundert” [The experience of distance. Manners of depiction of strangers in the eighteenth century], in *Der europäische Beobachter außereuropäischer Kulturen: Zur Problematik der Wirklichkeitswahrnehmung* [The European observer of non-European cultures. Problems of the perception of reality], ed. Hans-Joachim König (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1989), 9–42. Despite all their qualities, the following works do not entirely fulfill this requirement: K.H. Kohl, *Abwehr und Verlangen. Zur Geschichte der Ethnologie* [Resistance and desire. Towards a history of ethnology] (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Ed. Qumran im Campus-Verlag, 1987); K.H. Kohl, *Ethnologie – die Wissenschaft vom kulturell Fremden. Eine Einführung* [Ethnology—scholarship of the cultural stranger. An introduction] (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993); W. Petermann, *Die Geschichte der Ethnologie* [The history of ethnology] (Wuppertal: Edition Trickster im Peter Hammer Verlag, 2004). Petermann himself highlights that this

knowledge on “ethnic others,” it is necessary to examine the specific historical conditions of the gathering of ethnographic knowledge.

As different historical conditions created different cultures of knowledge, knowledge did matter, and the thirst for ethnographic knowledge is obviously one of the particular characteristics of modern times. Now the enlightened public, more than at any other time in history, was keen to produce, generate, collect, store, and distribute it in several forms.³ The eighteenth century was one of the times in which European fascination with the non-European Other was strongest.⁴ By exploring the world, it produced a vast array of ethnographic material, which had to be ordered, stored, and disseminated throughout the “knowledge society” of the era. The discourse of ethnography as a genuine category of thought and academic subject grew historically from three different roots.⁵ First, there was statistics and topography, which from the eighteenth century onwards determined the physical and economic profile as well as the statistical content of the rather ambiguous concept of *ethnos* (*Volk*). The homogenizing effect of this process made itself felt in the nineteenth century. Second, there was the ethnographic knowledge of the travelogues and other forms of travel literature. These not only covered a vast number of exotic cultures of the world but also claimed to present their inner logic and the laws of their functioning in a more or less subtle manner. While the world’s ethnic curiosities were described, the reader’s perception was trained to detect ethnic differences. As popular media, travelogues communicated powerful images of non-European cultures. At the same time,

history is written by an ethnologist (*Ethnologe*), not by a historian (*Historiker*). Cf. Petermann, *Die Geschichte der Ethnologie*, 17.

³ One could argue that this is common to our post-colonial age of the “knowledge society” as it was common in early modern times before the age of high colonialism. For a historical perspective: Jakob Vogel, “Von der Wissenschafts- zur Wissensgeschichte. Für eine Historisierung der ‘Wissensgesellschaft’” [From science- to knowledge-society. Towards a historicizing of “knowledge-society”] *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 30 (2004), 639–660.

⁴ J. Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens. Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert* [The disenchantment of Asia. Europe and the Asiatic empires in the eighteenth century] (Munich: Beck, 1998); Jürgen Osterhammel, “Welten des Kolonialismus im Zeitalter der Aufklärung” [Worlds of colonialism in the Age of Enlightenment], in *Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt* [Europe in the Age of Enlightenment and the non-European world], ed. H.J. Lüsebrink (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 19–36. Cf. also Petermann, *Die Geschichte der Ethnologie*, 13.

⁵ For this scheme: W. Kaschuba, *Einführung in die europäische Ethnologie* [Introduction to European ethnology] (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 2003), 29–34.

in academic circles they were one of the first and most widely used sources of ethnographic knowledge. The third discursive root of ethnography as a scientific endeavor was the Herderian ethos of a cultural heritage resonating in the original language, the folklore, and the culture of any people on earth. Every particular ethnic culture was thereby honored with its own distinguished quality. Its language was understood as one significant voice in the choir of humankind. That linguistic criteria became part of the definition of an *ethnos* was a major methodological innovation—even if Leibniz can be claimed as its intellectual father.⁶ A thorough knowledge history of ethnography must take into account this historical background of the ethnographic discourse, which made itself felt well into the nineteenth century.

While ethnographic artifacts were gathered and knowledge about ethnic groups was gained, different traditions of imagining the ethnographic diversity of mankind developed in different historical settings. In the following two different imperial manifestations of this imagination with its respective terms, concepts and functions for the legitimacy of imperial rule will be under consideration. To understand the impact of different imperial structures on the theory of ethnography, two different traditions of imperial ethnographies will be examined, namely British social anthropology and Russian ethnography. Their respective semantic traditions in the naming of ethnographic research will be understood as evidence for different orders of knowledge. Our thesis is that a maritime empire like the British Empire, with an obvious topographical distance between the homeland and the overseas colonies, had to develop a universal theory of ethnic difference as a function of its global civilizing mission. By contrast, a continental empire like Russia, ruling over Eurasian territories with gradual transitions from the core to the peripheries, had to come to terms with many particular situations of ethnic difference. Therefore no universal theory was applied, enabling the empire of the tsars to stay flexible enough to accommodate ethnic diversity of all possible kinds. While it is beyond dispute that Russian and British ethnography developed along different imperial paths, these different developments still await an explanation fitting into a comparative perspective of two empires with global aspirations. Such an explanation must, in any case, take into account the different histories of the British and the Russian acquisitions of empire,

⁶ H.F. Vermeulen, *Early History of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment: Anthropological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1710–1808* (Leiden: Han F. Vermeulen, 2008), 27–41, 45–61.

for it was unquestionably the character of these acquisitions that set the particular preconditions for the systematic study of the Other, and they also made the examination and explanation of ethnic otherness a question of importance for the respective ethnographic imagination. This is why we are interested in an inquiry on how the different imperial settings were responsible for the development of different forms of ethnographic knowledge-gathering and their conceptualization.

In contrast to the comparative approach widely accepted in the different variants of the new imperial history, which simply ignores the traditionally applied categories of maritime and continental empires, post-colonial studies give the imperial and post-imperial worlds of the continental empires of the Romanovs, the Ottomans, and the Han Dynasty a wide berth.⁷ It has therefore been argued that while Russia and China show no sign of coming to terms with their colonial pasts, more than twenty years after 1989, we are still in need of a historical anthropology of Eurasia in colonial times.⁸ As a precondition for any comparative discussion in the following, we will first highlight the different conceptions of ethnographic knowledge, which resonate in different semantic fields. As the semantics of ethnography itself can be traced back to the German term *Völkerkunde*, we have to consider the Central European ethnographic discourse, which influenced both the British and the Russian realm. In the following we will first introduce a history of the different semantic concepts connected with “anthropology” on the one hand and “ethnography” on the other. As the two concepts, with their different semantics, both originate in the Central European sphere, we have to consider broader contexts than just the narrow British or Russian realm. We then follow the different paths of both British anthropology and Russian ethnography, as well as their respective theories, before coming to a preliminary conclusion.

⁷ A positive exception is Ann Laura Stoler and Carole McGranahan, “Introduction: Refiguring Imperial Terrains,” in *Imperial Formations*, eds. A.L. Stoler and C. McGranahan (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 3–43.

⁸ Dittmar Schorkowitz, “Osteuropäische Geschichte und Ethnologie. Panorama und Horizonte” [Eastern European history and ethnology. Panorama and horizons], in *Hundert Jahre Osteuropäische Geschichte. Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft* [One hundred years of Eastern European history. Past, present and future], ed. Dittmar Dahlmann (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005), 237–256; Dittmar Schorkowitz, “Historical Anthropology in Eurasia ‘... and the Way Thither.’” *History and Anthropology* 23 (2012), 37–62.

What's In A Name? A Very Short History of Concepts

In the Anglo-Saxon world, contemporary studies on the social and cultural conditions of diverse ethnic groups are designated in their broadest sense as anthropology. The Latin word *anthropologia*—in use since the fifteenth century—is one of the oldest terms for this particular field of scholarly investigation.⁹ It is at the same time a most vague and most open concept, which in historical perspective comprised moral, philosophical, theological, and psychological as well as scientific perspectives on the nature of humankind. Physical anthropology as an independent sub-discipline emerged in the early eighteenth century. It was not by accident that a professor of forensic medicine, Hermann Friedrich Teichmeyer (1686–1744), sketched its outlines with his *Elementae anthropologiae* (1719) and thereby laid the scientific foundations of new disciplines like pre-history and archaeology. Medicine in the eighteenth century developed an enormous model-building power that influenced a wide array of subjects in the sciences as well as in the humanities, as, for instance, the interest in philosophical anthropology by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) shows.¹⁰ But only at the end of the eighteenth century did the practice of physical anthropology part ways with social and cultural anthropology. The current use of anthropology as an umbrella term, comprising disciplines like ethnography, ethnology, ethno-linguistic studies, folklore, and ethno-archaeology, was shaped early in the history of ethnographic knowledge.

The small German university town of Göttingen maintained relations with the Russian as well as the British academic world in the eighteenth century, while it played a pivotal role in the development of the term *Völker-Beschreibung* (description of peoples) and the practice of what was to become physical and social anthropology of the non-dominant ethnic groups under imperial rule. It was Göttingen, as a place of the German *Spätaufklärung* (late Enlightenment), where liberal academic principles took root; where collections of books, drawings, and artifacts

⁹ John Howland Rowe, "Ethnography and Ethnology in the 16th Century," *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* 30 (Spring 1964).

¹⁰ Kant lectured on this subject regularly between 1772 and 1796. Immanuel Kant, "Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht" [Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view], in I. Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik* 2 [Writings in anthropology, the philosophy of history, politics, and pedagogy 2], ed. W. Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000). For the history of medical knowledge: M. Foucault, *Naissance de la clinique. Une archéologie du regard médical* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963).

(*Kunstsachen*) were collected; and where rationalism and empiricism as instruments of research, education, and cultivation were held in the highest esteem. In Göttingen recently established subjects like *Cameralistik* and *Statistik* (as the two variants of the emerging political science), along with historiography and classical philology, had supplanted theology and philosophy. The concept of ethnography or *Völkerkunde*, which were for a time used as synonyms, first appeared in the works of the historian and linguist August Ludwig Schlözer (1735–1808). He worked in Göttingen and St. Petersburg in the 1760s and became professor in Göttingen in 1769. Schlözer used the term in his *Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte* (Halle, 1771) as well as in his *Vorstellung seiner Universal-Historie* (Göttingen, 1772).¹¹ The conceptualizing of ethnography owed much to Schlözer's close connections to the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and the numerous exploratory enterprises in the Russian Empire at that time. On the one hand, expeditions like the Great Nordic Expedition (1733–1743) were often accomplished by multinational and interdisciplinary groups of explorers. On the other hand, imperial states like Russia, and its unexplored areas in particular, drew the curiosity and interest of many scientists who saw them as a test case for their theories. The imperial state encouraged multiple efforts to gather reliable knowledge about the geography, botany, zoology, and not least, ethnography of its possessions. The plural form of the term *Völkerkunde* (knowledge of peoples), referring to the collection of knowledge about several peoples in a comparative frame, was later related to its singular form *Volkskunde* (knowledge of people), which aimed at the study of one particular group. From the perspective of the St. Petersburg Imperial Academy of Sciences, the description of the diverse peoples was of greater importance than the study of one distinct national group. The term *Volkskunde* was used beginning in the 1780s, when it appeared in works of Central European derivation. The term *Ethnologie* (ethnology) was first used as a designation

¹¹ Justin Stagl, "August Ludwig Schlözers Entwurf einer 'Völkerkunde' oder 'Ethnographie' seit 1772" [August Ludwig Schlözer's sketch of a *Völkerkunde* or "ethnography" since 1772], *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich*, no. 2 (1974), 73–91; Han F. Vermeulen, "Ethnographie und Ethnologie in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Völker-Beschreibung und Völkerkunde in Russland, Deutschland und Österreich (1740–1845)" [Ethnography and ethnology in Central and Eastern Europe. Description and knowledge of ethnic groups in Russia, Germany, and Austria (1740–1845)], in *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit. Festschrift für Günter Mühlhpfordt* [Europe in early modern times. Volume in honor of Günter Mühlhpfordt], ed. E. Donnert, vol. 6: *Mittel-, Nord- und Osteuropa* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002), 397–409.

for anthropology in Lausanne by the Swiss librarian and theologian Alexandre-César Chavannes (1731–1800) in 1787 and first used as an alternative designation for ethnography by the historian Johann Ernst Fabri (1755–1825). In the German-speaking countries, ethnology would sometimes be understood as a “general *Völkerkunde*” as opposed to a “particular *Völkerkunde*.” Only from 1860 onwards did a thorough theorization of ethnology as a field of study driven by a particular logic and distinct concepts take place, which prepared the ground for a specific meaning of this term in the Central European lands and Russia compared to North America and the British realm.¹²

In the 1840s the English term “folklore,” coined by the Scottish scholar William J. Thoms, came into usage as a neologism for the new meaning that the older German term *Volkskunde* had acquired in the meantime.¹³ This change in terminology signaled a fundamental epistemic change that took place in the first third of the nineteenth century, which also influenced the conceptualization of the field designated nowadays as anthropology in the Anglo-Saxon world and as *Ethnologie* (ethnology) in the German-speaking lands as well as elsewhere in Central Europe. The thesis of a teleological hierarchy of things and beings as the underlying principle governing all reality, developed most prominently by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), was no longer acceptable to scholars of the early nineteenth century.¹⁴ If from the perspective of the natural science of the eighteenth century, ethnic groups like the North American Indians were particular modifications of a universal human species that fulfilled exemplary functions, now the majority of ethnographers saw them as tribal groups of a different race, organized in narrow structures of kin and in need of a scientific genealogy. Another terminological development has to be taken into consideration. At the end of the nineteenth century, the distinction between the study of people or cultures from one’s own society and of the study of peoples and cultures from

¹² H.F. Vermeulen, “Von der Empirie zur Theorie: Deutschsprachige Ethnographie und Ethnologie von Gerhard Friedrich Müller bis Adolf Bastian (1740–1881).” [From empiricism to theory: German-speaking ethnography and ethnology from Gerhard Friedrich Müller to Adolf Bastian (1740–1881)], *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 134 (2009), 253–266.

¹³ Han F. Vermeulen, “Origins and Institutionalization of Ethnography and Ethnology in Europe and the USA, 1771–1845,” in *Fieldwork and Footnotes: Studies in the History of European Anthropology*, eds. H.F. Vermeulen and A. Alvarez Roldán (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 39–59, 54.

¹⁴ Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, 1936).

different societies, at least in Central and Eastern Europe, was already closely linked to two different terms—*Volkskunde* in the first case and *Völkerkunde* (ethnography) in the second. This was caused partly by the influence of the ideas of romanticism and partly by the influence of the imperial setting of ethnographic scholarship.¹⁵ The Russian imperial realm is most appropriately and most comprehensively designated by the term “ethnography.” The subject flourished early and to such an extent that the institutionalization of the discipline under the name *etnografiia* occurred earlier and was much more fostered by public interest than in Western Europe or North America. It does not make much sense to name it with an alien term. In the current German-speaking world, the term “ethnology” is used, because it comes closest to a translation of *Ethnologie*, still a common self-designation in contemporary scholarly circles.¹⁶ For the sake of convenience, the term “anthropology” will be applied here in accordance with its common usage, namely regarding the Anglo-Saxon tradition of ethnographic studies. Since this is an English text, the term will be used whenever the understanding of the matter would otherwise suffer.

It should be noted that ethnography and anthropology, as concepts, terms, and practices, developed alongside and in competition with each other. A genealogical relation between the two designations is simply misleading, even if it can be claimed that anthropology in a chronological as well as in a conceptional sense was shaped in the overarching discursive field of ethnography.¹⁷ This, however, does not affect our argument that the two designations embody two different historical imaginations, which will be dealt with in the following sections.

¹⁵ H.F. Vermeulen, “Anthropology in Colonial Contexts: The Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733–1743) and the Danish-German Arabia Expedition (1761–1767),” in *Anthropology and Colonialism in Asia and Oceania*, eds. J. van Bremen and A. Shimizu (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999), 13–39.

¹⁶ Kaschuba, *Einführung in die europäische Ethnologie* (2003). Still, ethnology in German-speaking lands tends to become more and more Anglicized as well as internationalized. Cf. W. Petermann, *Anthropologie unserer Zeit* [Anthropology of our time] (Wuppertal: Edition Trickster im Peter Hammer Verlag, 2010), 7–8, 167–169.

¹⁷ J. Stagl, *Kulturanthropologie und Gesellschaft. Eine wissenssoziologische Darstellung der Kulturanthropologie und Ethnologie* [Cultural anthropology and society. An account of cultural anthropology and ethnology as a sociology of knowledge] (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1981), 37–64; H.F. Vermeulen, *Early History of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment: Anthropological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1710–1808* (Leiden: Han F. Vermeulen, 2008), 283–286.

“...In a Fit Absence of Mind”?¹⁸ British Anthropology as the Subject of Marginal Men

The following considerations assume that as a scientific enterprise, but also as a legitimate area of scientific reasoning, the study of ethnic diversity was shaped and developed by central beliefs of individuals who, by their descent and habit, did not belong to the ruling strata of the British imperial society.¹⁹ Additionally, efforts to promote the utility of British anthropology for colonial rule produced only meager results, although some notable colonial officials endorsed it with enthusiasm.²⁰ British anthropology during the nineteenth century shifted its focus from questions relating to the origins of humankind to questions of the functions of its culture.²¹ In nineteenth-century Britain the anthropological enterprise was an offspring of a certain kind of paternalistic curiosity and a humanism that at times nurtured particularly anti-imperial traits. It was embodied by individuals from outside the inner circle of the traditional elites. In the British case, matters of ethnographic and anthropological content were first discussed at places and by persons situated at the fringes of a scholarly world that considered other topics far more important and interesting. The study of social and cultural diversity was discussed mainly in learned societies but not at the established universities. As the curricula in the humanities looked beyond the British Isles, they were overwhelmingly concerned with the Greco-Roman tradition. This was part of a conscious effort of the invention of a particular imperial tradition.²² One of the first

¹⁸ I refer to Robert Seeley's oft-quoted claim that Britain had "... conquered and peopled half the world in a fit absence of mind." Cf. J.R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London: MacMillan, 1883; Boston: Roberts, 1883), 8.

¹⁹ I am heavily indebted to the following accounts: Fredrik Barth, "Britain and the Commonwealth," in *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology*, eds. F. Barth et al. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3–57; Henrika Kuklick, "The British Tradition," in *A New History of Anthropology*, ed. H. Kuklick (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 52–78.

²⁰ Kuklick, "The British Tradition," 60–61.

²¹ This historical shift becomes obvious if one compares texts like the first programmatic chapter of Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* with "The Aim and Scope of Anthropology," an article that appeared one year before the merger of the ESL and ASL into the RAI. Cf. C.S.W., "The Aim and Scope of Anthropology," *Journal of Anthropology* 1, no. 1 (1870), 1–18.

²² C. Akça Ataç, "Ancient Historiography as Imperial Narrative: The Case of Macedonia and the Second British Empire," in *Stories of Empire: Narrative Strategies for the*

leading anthropologists of Britain, Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), became the keeper of the ethnographic Pitt-Rivers Museum (1883), a reader (1884), and finally a professor (1896) at Oxford University, but because he was a Quaker, he had not been allowed to study there.²³ When anthropology was taught as a single subject in undergraduate degree courses at British universities after World War II the subject had come a long way in establishing itself as an academic discipline. That is not to say that Britain's role in exploration, overseas trade, and colonial expansion during most of the nineteenth century did not lead to an ever-growing interest in a more global knowledge. It is remarkable, however, that major achievements such as the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin (1809–1882) were produced from among the scholarly traditions of geography, zoology, and botany—all of them in the realm of the naturalist sciences. At first the diversity of peoples, languages, and cultures of the still-expanding empire was obviously not a very stimulating factor in the academic life of imperial Britain.²⁴ Instead the beginnings of modern British curiosity about the “savages” lie within the reform movement, which wanted to ban slavery and the slave trade.²⁵ To quote Tylor, the first president of the newly created Section for Anthropology of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS), anthropology was a reformer's science.²⁶ The first British society de-

Legitimation of an Imperial World Order, eds. Chr. Knellwolf King and M. Rubik (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2009), 177–187.

²³ The universities of Oxford and Cambridge only admitted persons with views dissenting from official church tenets in the second half of the nineteenth century and did not open their gates to freethinkers, Jews, and women until even later. William Ryan Chapman, “Arranging Ethnology: A.H.L.F. Pitt Rivers and the Typological Tradition,” in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, ed. G.W. Stocking (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 15–48; Christopher Gosden, Frances Larson, and Alison Petch, “Origins and Survivals: Tylor, Balfour and the Pitt Rivers Museum and Their Role within Anthropology in Oxford 1883–1905,” in *A History of Oxford Anthropology*, ed. P. Riviere (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2007), 22–42.

²⁴ Barth, “Britain and the Commonwealth,” 4, mentions as the only two outstanding studies E.W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London: Knight, 1836) and Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (London: Bentley, 1839).

²⁵ George W. Stocking, “What's in a Name? The Origins of the Royal Anthropological Institute (1837–71),” *Man* New Series 6, no. 3 (September 1971): 369–390.

²⁶ Tylor, of course, understood anthropology as a natural science. For the quotation: Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7.

voted to ethnological inquiry, the Ethnological Society of London (1843), originated in the Aborigines Protection Society (1837). The latter chose as its motto *ab uno sanguine* (of one blood). A significant proportion of the members of both societies were Evangelical Christians from within as well as from outside the Anglican state Church of England. Conversion to Christianity, it was thought, should be the aim of enlightened policy toward the “uncivilized tribes.” In keeping with this aim, ethnographic information had to be gathered from all available sources, such as travelers’ or traders’ reports. As the major thinker of the Ethnological Society of London (ESL), James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848), an Evangelical Anglican who was raised as a Quaker, would be recognized as having “place[d] ethnology on a scientific basis.”²⁷ Tylor also called Prichard “the founder of modern anthropology.”²⁸ Prichard’s thought was guided by an essentialist interpretation of biblical stories. While human beings, as descendants of Noah and his family, were dispersed all over the globe, some parts of humankind degenerated, while others advanced. This variation, which according to Prichard could include racial characteristics, depended on the circumstances of life and signified the innate and common potential of all humans. Prichard’s views clearly put him in the camp of the monogenists, who opposed the view that human types could be identified as distinct species created separately. To trace the patterns of dispersion and development from biblical times, Prichard searched for linguistic affinities between parts of the global human population. He subscribed to the scenario that the encounter of isolated and exotic peoples with Europeans and their culture would cause the former to depart from the ways of traditional living and thinking, whether by their conversion or because of their extinction. Therefore Prichard wanted to record what soon might be extinguished forever. His memorandum *On the Extinction of Human Races* (1839) moved the BAAS to publish the first ethnographic questionnaire for travelers (1841). They took part in the collection of valuable ethnographic information and gathered significant ethnographic knowledge of humans, still unbaptized and uncivilized. Questionnaires were a

²⁷ Kuklick, “The British Tradition,” 52; George W. Stocking, “From Chronology to Ethnology: James Cowles Prichard and British Anthropology 1800–1850,” in *James Cowles Prichard: Researches into the Physical History of Man*, ed. G.W. Stocking (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), ix–cx, x.

²⁸ Edward B. Tylor, “Anthropology,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, vol. 1 (New York: Encyclopedia Britannica Company, 1910), 108–119, 108.

well-known tool for the accumulation of knowledge, and their earliest versions in the British context date back to the seventeenth century.²⁹ When in the early 1670s, the Royal Society undertook a “survey of England and Wales,” a set of “queries” asked the respondents to describe geographical features.³⁰ More elaborate ethnographic questionnaires followed, including the six editions of the well-known *Notes and Queries on Anthropology, for the Use of Travellers and Residents in Uncivilised Lands* (1874, 1892, 1899, 1912, 1929, and 1951) published by the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI).³¹ The findings of the travelers’ reports contributed to a change in contemporary theories about human descent. Narratives of human origin echoing a more or less biblical understanding of natural as well as human history were no longer credited with explanatory power. Human fossils unearthed in the middle of the nineteenth century suggested that the human species might have existed for much longer than had been believed. Non-European “savages,” it was speculated, might resemble primitive Europeans. In 1863, when James Hunt (1833–1869), a speech therapist and secretary of the society, broke with the ESL and founded a separate organization named (after the French model) the Anthropological Society of London (ASL), he did so in a climate of fierce debates over the character of the human race. The ASL questioned the Darwinian and monogenetic views commonly held by the leadership of the ESL but nevertheless hypothesized connections between humans and apes. To make things worse, the ASL endorsed political positions that were anathema to the enlightened mindset of the small group of ESL members. It not only excluded women from its membership but also sided with the Confederates’ fight to preserve slavery in the American Civil War and applauded the ruthless suppression of an 1866 uprising of black farmers in Jamaica, by then a British colonial possession.³² The alliance between the Christian ethnologists of the ESL and the growing number of Darwinians, after almost a decade of struggle, led to an appeasement of the racist ideas of Hunt and his followers. ESL and ASL

²⁹ For the Spanish imperial context: A. Brendecke, *Imperium und Empirie. Funktionen des Wissens in der spanischen Kolonialherrschaft* [Empire and empiricism. Functions of knowledge during Spanish colonial rule] (Cologne: Böhlau, 2009), 261–290.

³⁰ E.G.R. Taylor, “Robert Hooke and the Cartographical Projects of the Late Seventeenth Century (1666–1696),” *Geographical Journal* 90 (1937): 529–540.

³¹ Kuklick, “The British Tradition,” 54; Barth, “Britain and the Commonwealth,” 10.

³² Stocking, “What’s in a Name?”; Thomas F. Glick, “The Anthropology of Race Across the Darwinian Revolution,” in *A New History of Anthropology*, ed. H. Kuklick (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 225–241, 228.

both joined the newly founded Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) in 1871.

The first generation of British anthropologists did not carry out systematic fieldwork studies. Apparently they had not taken into account the secondhand nature of the data gained from the evaluation of queries, supplied by explorers, missionaries, and administrators throughout the British Empire. If the *Notes and Queries* continued to play a role in British ethnography at a time when it increasingly became a practical fieldwork enterprise, this was due to its use as a tool for the organization of knowledge. Fieldwork studies often structured their fields of inquiry, as well as their presentation of the results, after the categories already established in the *Notes and Queries*. With Tylor and Prichard and eventually James George Frazer (1854–1941), the period of armchair scholars in anthropology inevitably ended. However, Frazer's voluminous study of magic and religion, *The Golden Bough* (1911–1936), still influenced anthropologists of generations to come, like Bronisław Malinowski (1884–1942) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009), who claimed to have read it in their student days. The overall picture changed significantly starting from the end of the 1890s. It is a generally held view that the Torres Straits expedition of 1898, led by the Baptist zoologist Alfred Cort Haddon (1855–1940), who lost his faith because of Darwin's findings and specialized in the study of invertebrates, profoundly shaped the character of the discipline. It demonstrated how the quality of anthropological data at hand could be enhanced. Fredrik Barth has pointed to four major changes that occurred in the subsequent twenty-five years in British anthropology and that all related to the Torres Strait expedition.³³ First, information was thereafter acquired firsthand. The anthropologist became an instrument of scientific inquiry itself. Second, the anthropological data were interconnected, which also meant that it was no longer "culture" in an abstract, general sense at the center of investigation but a particular local culture. Third, the systematic mapping of the local genealogy was the major methodological insight from the study of the inhabitants of the Torres Straits islands. This mapping was developed into a genealogical method by William Halse Rivers (1864–1922) and his disciples. Barth concludes that Rivers and Charles Gabriel Seligman (1873–1940) owed their status as major figures of British anthropology to that particular expedition. Fourth, it is striking that both of them were anthropologists neither by educational training nor by profession. The young Seligman was a

³³ Barth, "Britain and the Commonwealth," 12–13.

medical pathologist when he joined Haddon's team in 1898. Rivers was a medical doctor who had just been appointed to a lectureship in physiological and experimental psychology at Cambridge. Both were to carry out an impressive amount of the new kind of ethnographic fieldwork after their return from the Torres Straits. The principles of this fieldwork would still be followed by future generations of British anthropologists. One could add a fifth point concerning British anthropology after 1898, which was a structural feature that was not going to change: there was no institutional framework, or at least no academic subject, before or after the expedition. Although in 1901 Rivers studied the Todas, an ethnic group in southern India, and Seligman's next ventures covered British New Guinea and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) as well as the Nile Valley, no special alliance between the colonial administration and anthropology came into being.

Malinowski, a Pole from Krakow, in his seminal *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), presented a new kind of ethnographic data that he gathered while spending two years (1915/1916 and 1917/1918) on the Trobriand Islands, an archipelago off the southeastern coast of New Guinea, at that time a British possession. A pupil of Rivers, he refined and synthesized the new methods of ethnographic fieldwork. While incorporating the lessons of the Torres Straits expedition, he conducted an almost comprehensive survey of all concrete data. This included the statistical documentation of household and village composition, land rights, exchanges, and distributions, as well as ritual, technical, and economic activities. Malinowski tried to achieve this aim through a technique called "participatory observation," for which his personal linguistic abilities served him well. His collected material enabled him to publish a series of monographs, each of them concerned with another major institution of Trobriand culture, over the next thirteen years that were widely read even beyond the narrow circles of anthropologists.³⁴ The underlying assertion of Malinowski's gathering of all available ethnographic data was the idea that every detail of a given culture played a role in its functioning. Each local culture constituted—according to Malinowski—an integrated mechanism, serving humans to adapt to their external physical and cultural environment. This perspective has been labeled "functionalism." Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955), who published the account of his fieldwork in the Andaman Islands (1906–1908) as late as 1922, when

³⁴ Malinowski himself encouraged this interest by choosing titles like *Sex and Repression in a Savage Society* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1927) or *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (London: Routledge, 1929).

Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* came out, embodied—like his prominent contemporary—in his person and his work the new paradigm of British social anthropology. Between 1937 and 1946, Radcliffe-Brown was the first holder of the chair of social anthropology at the University of Oxford, and unlike Malinowski, he always distanced himself from the label “functionalist.” Nevertheless he subscribed to a model of human culture, which almost completely ignored the effects of colonialism on the ethnic groups under consideration. It is a historical irony that British anthropology under the influence of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown applied an almost ahistorical model of cultural difference, which suited British imperial needs very well, at a time when Russian ethnography began to serve the imperial aspirations of the Soviets under the banner of a universal theory of ethnic equality and historical progress.

All the Tsar's Peoples: Ambiguities of *Etnografiia* in the Russian Empire

Anthropology in Tsarist Russia has been portrayed as a case of an ethnographically very diverse imperial appropriation through radical activism.³⁵ This view has had prominent advocates such as Ernest Gellner, whose claim that “[a] Russian anthropologist was a man filling up his time in Siberian exile” seems to be undisputed to this day.³⁶ Even if some points favor this observation, I would apply a far more cautious view. One has to carefully differentiate between the sometimes anti-imperial purpose of Russian ethnography and its obvious imperial function. Under imperial conditions, ethnography in the Russian Empire rather ambiguously served as a means of communication between the imperial center and the

³⁵ Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov, “Political Fieldwork, Ethnographic Exile, and State Theory: Peasant Socialism and Anthropology in Late-Nineteenth-Century Russia,” in *A New History of Anthropology*, ed. H. Kuklick (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 191–206.

³⁶ E. Gellner, *Anthropology and Politics: Revolutions in the Sacred Grove* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), x; Stagl, *Kulturanthropologie und Gesellschaft* (1981), 85–87. Also: Ernest Gellner et al., “The Soviet and the Savage,” *Current Anthropology* 16 (1975), 595–617; E. Gellner, *Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1998), 113–156; E. Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1994), 74–80.

peripheries. It was an active part of the circulation of knowledge between the local and the imperial level.³⁷

The knowledge of peripheral regions as well as of their inhabitants was, in Russia more than anywhere else, admittedly fostered by disloyal subjects of the tsars. One of the earliest ethnographic descriptions of Siberia was written by Johann von Strahlenberg (1676–1747), a German officer in Swedish service who had fallen into Russian captivity and was sent to Siberia. Strahlenberg came into contact with another Swedish officer who had founded a school in Tobolsk. Strahlenberg's description of Siberian peoples, in which he lists thirty-two northern languages, earned him the title of the “father of Ural-Altaic linguistics.”³⁸ A great deal of the ethnographic exploration of Siberia was done by exiled intellectuals who, for various reasons, made it their task to study the culture of its non-Russian and Russian inhabitants. Among them were many whose own background made them part of the multiethnic mosaic of the Russian Empire. But one must also consider the leading role of the tsarist state and its institutions. The geographic and ethnographic exploration of Russia's vast proportion of the Eurasian landmass was done on behalf of the tsarist state, which financed the lion's share of it. Expeditions fulfilled a vital interest of the imperial elite. Since the first expeditions in the seventeenth century, explorers with an academic background—many of them had recently graduated from a Central or Western European university—and local administrators, as well as informants from among different ethnic groups, worked hand in hand for that goal. Russia provided the young historians, geographers, and naturalists with the needed test cases for their research, and for some of them their Russian experience served as a springboard for their career. The practices of knowledge-gathering they developed during their time in Russia were developed in a situation where the ambiguous needs of empire made themselves felt. The common European pattern of ruling through the power of knowledge were forced on Russia by Peter I (1672–1725). An example of a young scientist taking

³⁷ Susan Gross Solomon, “Circulation of Knowledge and the Russian Locale,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9 (2008), 9–26.

³⁸ Ph. J. von Strahlenberg, *An Histori-Geographical Description of the North and Eastern Part of Europe and Asia; but More Particularly of Russia, Siberia, and Great Tartary; ... Together with an Entire New Polyglot-Table of the Dialects of 32 Tartarian Nations: and a Vocabulary of the Kalmuck-Mungalian Tongue. As Also, a Large and Accurate Map of Those Countries; and Variety of Cuts, ... Written Originally in High German* (London: W. Innys and R. Manby, 1736) [originally published in German: Stockholm: In Verlegung des Autoris, 1730].

part in the expeditionary exploration of the Russian empire is Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783), a historian of German origin. His groundbreaking ethnographic method was influenced by his experience on the Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733–1743) as one of three professors in the service of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In a practical text of 1732, Müller included as fields of historical interest the following: the area and the forms of settlement of peoples, the history of their settlement and legends of their descent, beliefs and religious practice, costumes and conventions, economic structures, language and script, ethnonyms and characteristics of their surrounding space, topographies and architecture, physiognomy, and the traditional costume of the people. In doing so he separated these subjects from the fields of the naturalists' inquiry. In preparing himself for the expedition, Müller was not concerned about the benefits of the expedition's results. The Second Kamchatka Expedition was a massive project of the tsarist state, involving more than 3,000 persons, among them sailors, officers, soldiers, translators, and draughtsmen, as well as experts in shipbuilding, astronomy, geology, botany, and zoology. The Russian Academy of Sciences, the Senate, and the Admiralty wanted the findings of the Second Kamchatka Expedition to be of economic use for the empire. Thus the findings were declared secret, and the researchers had to hide their records. But under the impression of new insights from the expedition, Müller and his colleagues had to adapt their research programs. To facilitate the systematic gathering of ethnographic details, Müller wrote detailed instructions in 1737 as well as a questionnaire for his collaborator Stepan P. Krasheninnikov. Now the administrative task to secure Kamchatka's wealth for the empire was no longer absent. Müller included several questions about tributary payments. The ethnographic description covered the indigenous Kamchadals in the same manner as the Russian settlers. For Müller there was no methodological difference between examining the lives of alien tribes and European colonists. He nevertheless understood the colonial traits of the observed living conditions. But his scientific perspective clearly mirrors the age before the advent of nationalism. In his effort to separate historical and ethnographic fields of research, in 1740 Müller published more instructions describing in great detail the forms of ethnographic observation in the field and unbiased description. He now explicitly excluded the Russian colonists from the ethnographic endeavor. Because the Russian academy did not publish the results of the Second Kamchatka Expedition, journals, ethnographic collections, and drawings of flora and fauna, as well as of the inhabitants of the peninsula and of their architecture, were kept in the archives. Still, Müller's empirical as well as methodological findings

were used by his disciple August Ludwig Schlözer, who was among the first to use the terms *Völkerkunde* and *Ethnographie* synonymously. But Schlözer, of course, not only coined a new term but also shaped the professional standards and boundaries of the new discipline.

Even if later expeditions in the Russian Empire lacked the impressive financial and personal backing of the Second Kamchatka Expedition, this kind of ethnographic knowledge collection was a common instrument in Russia throughout the nineteenth century. A few examples from the first half of the century may suffice here: Benjamin Bergmann's and Isaak Jacob Schmidt's ethnographic exploration of the nomadic Kalmyks (1802–1803, 1804–1806),³⁹ Heinrich Julius Klaproth's expedition to the Caucasus (1807–1808),⁴⁰ Otto von Kotzebue's expeditions in the North Pacific, to Alaska and Northeast Asia (1815–1818, 1823–1826),⁴¹ Alexander von Humboldt's travels in Western Siberia and Central Asia (1828–1829),⁴² Alexander Theodor von Middendorf's and Karl Ernst von Baer's

³⁹ B. Bergmann, *Nomadische Streifereien unter den Kalmyken in den Jahren 1802 und 1803* [Nomadic forays among the Kalmyks in 1802 and 1803] (Riga, 1804–1805). For Schmidt, one of the Russian founding fathers of Central Asian studies, cf. Franz Babinger, "Isaak Jakob Schmidt (1779–1847)," in *Festschrift für Friedrich Hirth* [Volume in honor of Friedrich Hirth], ed. Otto Kümmel (Berlin and Leipzig: Oesterheld und Co., 1920), 7–21.

⁴⁰ H.J. Klaproth, *Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien unternommen in den Jahren 1807 und 1808 auf Veranlassung der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu St. Petersburg* [Journey into the Caucasus and to Georgia in 1807 and 1808 at the instigation of the Imperial Academy of the Sciences St. Petersburg] (Halle, Berlin: Buchhandlung des Hallischen Waisenhauses, 1812–1814), H.J. Klaproth, *Tableau historique, géographique, ethnographique et politique, du Caucase et des Provinces limitrophes entre la Russie et la Perse* (Paris: Ponthieu, 1827).

⁴¹ O. von Kotzebue, *Entdeckungsreise in die Süd-See und nach der Berings-Straße zur Erforschung einer nordöstlichen Durchfahrt, unternommen in den Jahren 1815, 1816, 1817 und 1818, auf Kosten Sr. Erlaucht des Herrn Reichs-Kanzlers Grafen Rumanzoff auf dem Schiffe Rurick, unter dem Befehl des Lieutenants der Russische-Kaiserlichen Marine Otto von Kotzebue* [A voyage of discovery into the South Sea and Bering Strait for the purpose of exploring a Northeast Passage, undertaken in 1815–1818], 3 vols. (Weimar: Hoffmann, 1821), O. von Kotzebue, *Neue Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1823, 1824, 1825 und 1826*, 2 vols. (Weimar: Hoffmann, 1830).

⁴² J. Loewenberg, *Alexander von Humboldts Reisen in America und Asien* [Alexander von Humboldt's travels in America and Asia] (Berlin: Hasselberg, 1840); A. von Humboldt, *Asie centrale. Recherches sur les chaînes de montagnes et la climatologie*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gide, 1843), A. von Humboldt, *Central-Asien. Untersuchungen über die Gebirgsketten und die vergleichende Klimatologie*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Kleemann, 1844) [Digital copy: <http://www.mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn/resolver.pl?urn=urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10433528-7>].

travels in Siberia and northern Russia (1840, 1843–1845),⁴³ and Matthias Alexander Castrén's linguistic explorations of the peoples of Karelia, northern Russia and Siberia (1838–1839, 1841–1844, 1845–1849).⁴⁴

The continuously gathered ethnographic data were concentrated in the capital of the Russian Empire, where the Academy of Sciences coordinated the efforts to order and analyze the vast amounts of material. It was not only the sheer amount of the collections that was responsible for an early and abundant institutionalization of ethnographic curiosity in imperial Russia. In 1837 St. Petersburg saw the opening of the world's first ethnographic museum, whose collections date from the days of Tsar Peter I.⁴⁵ Contrary to the claims of Vermeulen, a chair for *etnografiia* under the auspices of the Academy of the Sciences was probably not established in the same year.⁴⁶ Another important step towards the professionalization of ethnographic research in the Russian Empire was taken with the foundation of the Russian Geographic Society (*Russkoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo*, RGO) in 1845. Even if this institution was not an official body of the imperial state, it received regular and significant funding. As a sign of its importance, from 1849 onwards the RGO was allowed to call itself "Imperial."⁴⁷ Due to backing from high places, the RGO represented one

⁴³ A. Th. von Middendorf, *Reise in den äussersten Norden und Osten Sibiriens* [Journey into the northernmost and easternmost parts of Siberia], 7 vols. (St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1847–1875).

⁴⁴ M.A. Castrén, *Nordische Reisen und Forschungen* [Nordic travels and investigations], 12 vols. (St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1853–1862).

⁴⁵ Respective museums were founded in Copenhagen in 1848, in Leipzig and Berlin in 1873, in Dresden and Rome in 1874, in Paris (Trocadéro) in 1878, and in Vienna and Oxford in 1884. Cf. Petermann, *Die Geschichte der Ethnologie*, 414.

⁴⁶ Vermeulen, "Ethnographie und Ethnologie in Mittel- und Osteuropa," 406. The most reliable depictions of these early developments of the subject do not mention this chair. Cf. A.N. Pypin, *Istoriia russkoi etnografii* [The history of Russian ethnography] (St. Petersburg: Stasjulevič, 1890, 1891); Konstantin V. Ostrovitianov, ed., *Istoriia akademii nauk SSSR* [The history of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR], vol. 2: 1803–1917 (Moscow and Leningrad: Nauka, 1964), 209–218, 612–621. However, a chair of anthropology was founded at Moscow University in 1880. Its first holder was Dmitry N. Anuchin (1843–1923), a member of the RGO. Cf. H. Schulz and St. P. Dunn, "Mensch–Anthropologie" [Man–anthropology], in *Sowjetsystem und Demokratische Gesellschaft. Eine vergleichende Enzyklopädie* [Soviet system and democratic society. A comparative encyclopedia], vol. 4 (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 1971), 461–491, 476–477.

⁴⁷ It was now called Imperatorskoe Russkoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo. Nathaniel Knight, "Science, Empire, and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographical Society 1845–1855," in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. J. Burbank

of the leading research institutions of the country. For the academicians and enlightened bureaucrats who together joined the ranks of the RGO, ethnography was an important field of research, and it therefore had to be counted among the RGO's major challenges. This specific field of research, previously considered a subfield on the border between science and humanities, was now to be studied in its own right. Therefore, a separate ethnographic section of the RGO was created. The other three sections were general geography, the geography of the Russian Empire, and statistics. As scientific objects, Russian peasants were of the same interest to the members of the ethnographic section of the RGO as the indigenous peoples of Siberia.

To gain voluntary informants in the provinces of the empire, the RGO in 1852 issued a call via educational institutions and administrative channels. Brief instructions on how to write ethnographic descriptions were distributed in more than 7,000 copies. Even if the quality of the resulting descriptions was not fully adequate, the quantity of answers was impressive. About 2,000 descriptions of ethnographic conditions of diverse places and groups of the empire, most of them written by members of the minor clergy, teachers, and lower ranks of the aristocracy, were received.⁴⁸ The instructions included common European categories of ethnographic questionnaires: appearance, language, domestic life, and characteristics of social life, manners, and education, as well as folklore and material remnants. Additionally, a revised version of the questionnaire drew the attention of the informants to questions of economic practice and social change. Unlike in the Central and Western European perspective, however, the collection of ethnographic knowledge was separated from its evaluation and utilization. The St. Petersburg RGO, in contrast to the Ethnological or the Anthropological Society of London, was not particularly interested in the prehistory of mankind. Its surveys of the ethnic and social heterogeneity of the Russian Empire owed a great deal to the belief that with its help, imperial rule could be exercised in a more enlightened and efficient manner. Even if the communication between the RGO and various administrative agencies has to be examined in greater detail, the use

and D.L. Ransel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 108–141.

⁴⁸ The results were partially published under the title *Sobranie mestnikh etnograficheskikh opisaniy Rossii. Etnograficheskii sbornik, izdavaemii Imperatorskim Russkim Geograficheskim Obshchestvom* [Collection of local ethnographic descriptions of Russia. Ethnographic reader, published by the Imperial Russian Geographic Society], vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: RGO, 1853).

of the statistical and ethnographic data by enlightened tsarist bureaucrats is an undisputed fact. Descriptions of the various regional judicial norms of the common law of Russian peasantry, for instance, were used as arguments in the debate on the liberation of serfs in Russia that occurred in 1861 as an important pillar of the Great Reforms in the 1860s. The rich ethnographic collections of the RGO nevertheless failed to inspire a systematic analysis of the material. The quantity of knowledge was not transformed into a high-quality new interpretation. To this day historians consider the analytical complexity of Russian ethnography as relatively low.⁴⁹ This is remarkable, especially because concepts from abroad were by no means unknown in Russia.⁵⁰

Due to the imperial conditions of its development, ethnography in the Russian Empire for most of the nineteenth century witnessed an inner tension between the cultural background of a significant number of ethnographers and their imperial mission and tasks. Some of the first professional ethnographers originated from those territories of the old Polish Commonwealth that came under Russian rule later in the eighteenth century. Undoubtedly, they regarded themselves not as Russians in an ethnic sense, but rather as Finns, Poles, or Jews. If they served the bureaucratic needs of the ethnography of empire, at the same time they utilized it for their own rather particular ethnographic interest in the pre-history of their respective culture. Two examples may suffice. Wacław Sieroszewski (1858–1945), a Polish expatriate to Siberia, studied the language and customs of the Yakuts from 1879. Despite his continuous efforts to escape from the various places of his banishment, he was awarded a prize for his

⁴⁹ A. Rustemeyer and D. Siebert, *Alltagsgeschichte der unteren Schichten im Russischen Reich (1861–1914). Kommentierte Bibliographie zeitgenössischer Titel und Bericht über die Forschung* [A history of everyday life of the lower strata in the Russian Empire (1861–1914). Annotated bibliography of contemporary publications and research report] (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997), 24–27; Boris Chichlo, “L’Ethnographie soviétique est-elle une anthropologie?” [Is Soviet ethnography an anthropological discipline?], in *Histoires de l’Anthropologie (XVI–XIX siècles)* [Histories of anthropology (sixteenth to nineteenth century)], ed. B. Rupp-Eisenreich (Paris: Klincksieck, 1984), 247–258; Sergei Sokolovskii, “De la particularité de l’anthropologie russe” [On the particularity of Russian anthropology], in *Panorama de l’anthropologie russe contemporaine* [Panorama of contemporary Russian anthropology], eds. B. Petric and E. Filippova (Paris: Harmattan, 2011), 67–82.

⁵⁰ Nathaniel Knight, “Nikolai Kharuzin and the Quest for a Universal Human Science: Anthropological Evolutionism and the Russian Ethnographic Tradition, 1885–1900,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9 (2008), 83–112.

ethnographic work by the RGO.⁵¹ Because of this award, in 1898 he was allowed to return to Poland. A leading Russian ethnographer of the early twentieth century was Lev Shternberg (1861–1927). As an advocate of “participant observation” (what he called “the stationary method”), he was one of the scholars who conducted long-term ethnographic field research among the indigenous peoples of northern Sakhalin, where he lived as a political exile between 1889 and 1899.⁵² Due to his longtime activities for the St. Petersburg Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography and the Ethnographic Division of the RGO, as well as his regular participation at the International Congress of Americanists, Shternberg became the father of the Leningrad school of Russian ethnography and an influential and internationally recognized Russian ethnographer.⁵³ Ideologies of Russian ethnographers, like *narodnichestvo* (Populism) or the Marxism of persons like Shternberg, looked at the ethnographic Other as a role model from whom one could learn to improve oneself and society.⁵⁴ Regardless of its anti-imperial overtones, their vision was structured by a particular imperial perspective. Of course, it was not the political regiment of the tsars and the ruling bureaucracy that they had in mind. It was an alternative federal empire of the “other,” uncorrupted part of mankind.⁵⁵

Qualities of Ethnographic Knowledge in Two Imperial Realms

What is to be gained from a comparison of the British with the Russian case in terms of conceptualizing ethnographic knowledge? Where does the structural difference lie between British social anthropology, with its

⁵¹ Waclaw Sieroszewski, *Jakuty. Opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniia* [The Yakuts. Experience of ethnographic explorations] (St. Petersburg: RGO, 1896); Robert J. Theodoratus, “Waclaw Sieroszewski and the Yakut of Siberia,” *Ethnohistory* 24 (1977): 103–115.

⁵² Lev Shternberg, *The Social Organization of the Gilyak*, ed. B. Grant (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

⁵³ S. Kan, *Lev Shternberg: Anthropologist, Russian Socialist, Jewish Activist* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

⁵⁴ Ssorin-Chaikov, “Political Fieldwork.”

⁵⁵ Susi K. Frank, “Anthropologie als Instrument imperialer Identitätsstiftung. Russisch-sibirische Rassentheorien” [Anthropology as a tool of imperial identity formation. Russian-Siberian theories of race], in *Kultur in der Geschichte Russlands: Räume, Medien, Identitäten, Lebenswelten* [Culture in the history of Russia. Spaces, media, identities, lifeworlds], ed. B. Pietrow-Ennker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2007) 203–233.

roots in both Christian humanitarianism and racial polygenism, and Russian ethnography, with its early institutionalization as an imperial instrument of surveying the territory and its scholars with an anti-imperial background? Let us first briefly look at the similarities. It can be argued that institutional places and historical agents of ethnographic knowledge accumulation under British auspices were not situated at the center of the established academic and political practices, even if at times they participated willingly in colonial endeavors. In this respect the Russian case shows a much more ambiguous trend. Yet in both cases researchers tried steadily to move towards the imperial centers and wanted to obtain public and academic resources for their respective disciplines. Russian ethnographers operating under the conditions of the early Soviet Union were quite successful in this task until the 1930s.⁵⁶ The institutionalization in London and Oxford as well as in St. Petersburg relied heavily on the nuclei of existing documentary material, whether in the form of collections of artifacts, prints, and reports stored in museums or libraries or as the accumulated knowledge of completed “queries” or reports of travelers, missionaries, and colonial administrators. A critical or neutral position vis-à-vis the imperial state did not prevent ethnographers from both empires from serving imperial goals. Even if anthropology and ethnography did not make common cause with the local colonial administrators, they followed an imperial project of their own character. Ethnography in both empires was part of the effort to let knowledge circulate between the imperial center and the more or less peripheral lands under colonial administration.⁵⁷ We still do not know enough about this intra-imperial knowledge circulation to compare the two imperial realms.⁵⁸ But it is safe to say that anthropology and ethnography did convey stereotypes of the ethnic and cultural

⁵⁶ F. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 21–60.

⁵⁷ Considering the knowledge of the non-European world: Jürgen Osterhammel, “Vorüberlegung: Westliches Wissen und die Geschichte nichteuropäischer Zivilisationen” [Preface. Western knowledge and the history of non-European civilizations], in *Krisenbewußtsein, Katastrophenerfahrungen und Innovationen 1880–1945* [Awareness of crises, experience of catastrophes, and innovations 1880–1945], eds. W. Küttler, J. Rüsen, and E. Schulin (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997), 307–313.

⁵⁸ For the case of British India, one has to cite two important contributions, even if they are at odds with each other: Chr. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); K. Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650–1900* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Other than diverse parts of the imperial societies made use of. The differences, however, between the two cases of conceptualizing ethnographic knowledge seem much more obvious. They could be observed in the following interrelated fields: two different empires, with their respective histories of imperial exploration of territories and peoples, made different use of the enlightened concept of *Völkerbeschreibung* (description of peoples). Different conditions of empire resulted in different historical depths of institutionalization of the respective disciplines and finally in separate traditions of knowledge cultures. It is obvious that in the land-based Russian Empire expanding in the vast territories of northern Eurasia, the difference between the ethnic Other and the imperial self had to be conceptualized in a different way than in the maritime empire of Britain, where the core of the empire was always understood as fundamentally different from the overseas colonies – not only but also because of the geographical gap between them.⁵⁹ The folklore and ethnology of the British Isles was much more separated from the social anthropology of indigenous people than the ethnographic perspective on Russian and Ukrainian peasants was from the ethnographic descriptions of Siberian people. The anthropological tradition of the British Empire, with its global interest and a need to legitimize a hierarchical social order, is one of a “systematic study of human unity-in-diversity,”⁶⁰ as George W. Stocking has observed. The tradition of Russian ethnography, however, with its need to conceptualize different and sometimes conflicting imperial situations, emphasized the diversity of ethnographic knowledge without generating a full-fledged theory explaining this difference. While the state and its agencies played a decisive role in the early institutionalization of ethnography in St. Petersburg, Russian ethnographers never developed an analytical framework for the study of the many ethnic groups of the Russian Empire. Ethnography’s function as an imperial discipline, helping to regulate the diversity of the heterogeneous empire, was of highest importance in the Russian case; but at the same time, ethnography in Russia served as a mirror and an expression of the self-description of imperial Russian ethnographers, as Yuri Slezkine suggested.⁶¹ Given this contradictory picture, we have to take the

⁵⁹ The best comparative history of the two different imperial expansions is given by D. Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals* (London: Murray, 2000).

⁶⁰ George W. Stocking, Jr., “History of Anthropology: Whence/Whither,” in *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork*, ed. G.W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 5.

⁶¹ Y. Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

lacking theoretical foundation of Russian ethnography seriously. If we look at this lacuna not as a sign of backwardness in comparison to the West but as a significant mark of Russian imperial ethnography, our interpretation becomes sharper. It was precisely the non-theorization of Russian ethnography that made it possible to describe the diverse ethnic groups of the empire in the most possible detail without the need to compare them systematically or to put them on different steps on the ladder of civilization—as was done in British anthropology.⁶² To apply George Stocking's remark about the "study of human unity-in-diversity" to nineteenth-century Russian ethnography, it has to be reformulated as the "study of human diversity-in-(imperial) unity."⁶³

⁶² Nathaniel Knight, "Seeking the Self in the Other: Ethnographic Studies of Non-Russians in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845–1860," in *Defining Self: Essays on Emergent Identities in Russia; Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century*, ed. M. Branch (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2009), 117–138.

⁶³ George W. Stocking, Jr., "History of Anthropology: Whence/Whither," 5.

Russian Ethnography as a Science: Truths Claimed, Trails Followed

Alexei Elfimov

Whether ethnography is a science has been a subject of perennial questioning, and perhaps this fact in itself implies that ethnography is probably not one—at any rate, as far as the mainstream contemporary understanding of “science” goes. Yet it has always sought to be one. Whether in the American tradition, where in November 2010 the term “science” was finally, to the dismay of many, omitted from the mission statement of the American Anthropological Association, or in the Russian tradition, where the term, to the dismay of few, remains and is not going anywhere, ethnography has long had both the drive to claim scientific status and an uncertainty that that status truly belonged to it.¹

A minor—or major, depending on how one looks at it—complication of the Russian discursive and institutional context has to do with the very usage of *nauka*, the Russian term for “science.” The meanings and ambiguities written into that word have had important consequences for the ways in which disciplines have positioned themselves in the academic domain in Russia.

First, even though etymological parallels are often deceptively attractive (yet still revealing), it *is* semantically important and consequential that *nauka* differs from *science* in its etymological load. *Science*

¹ Strikingly, the 2010 omission of the word “science” from the discipline’s mission statement by the AAA executive committee, which immediately produced a discursive firestorm (that anthropologists and commenters on the anthropology blog *savageminds.org* called a “dust storm” or even less pleasant phrases), went virtually unnoticed in the Russian ethnographic community. One could suggest many reasons for this lack of curiosity, but the general reluctance to accept the issue as “unsettled” and a sense that “the trouble is not ours” (yet) have been probably among them.

originated from the same root (Latin *scire*, Indo-European *skei-*) as, for instance, *scissors* and takes us back to the idea of being able to “finely cut or split things,” to “subtly tell one thing from another.” *Nauka* stemmed from a different root (*uk-*), that also produced the Russian words *uchit'sia* (learn), *navyk* (skill), *privychka* (habit), and even *obychai* (custom). When you fall and hurt yourself, your father tells you “*Budet tebe nauka!*” (“Let this be a lesson for you!”), and this is ultimately what *nauka* is about. It is about converting the experience that you accumulate out there into habits and skills that you might need for living in this world. (The concept ain't so bad, all things considered!)

So the difference is that *science* takes us to the analytical model of knowledge, while *nauka* brings us to the cumulative one. I wish to pinpoint it because it is this particular framework of understanding the scope of the scientist's behavior (*nauchnaia deiatel'nost'*) that might help to explain why ethnography's practitioners in Russia could, and often still can, readily justify even the most primitive kind of collecting and cataloguing activity as “science.” This is *not* to say that an analytical kind of inquiry is not considered “science” or that it is missing from the range of things that ethnographers in Russia do. This is to say that collecting and depositing “facts” in ethnography is by and large considered enough for it to be scientific, and no further justification is needed in that sense.² As Sergei Sokolovski points out, the idea that we are participating in the building of some sort of Great Wall of Scientific Knowledge and that every participant's mission is to add a brick to it, thus ensuring his or her connection and contribution to science, is still a rather typical idea in Russia's academic ethnographic milieu.³

Second, *nauka*, in the contemporary Russian academic setting, is a very broad term, indeed a holistic one. Everything that is taught at the university is *nauka*. Physics or mathematics, philology or history—they are all *nauki* (“sciences”). Now, there are supplementary rubrics designed to subdivide the field. Thus we have, in case we need them divided like

² In the never-finished project of surveying moods and preferences in the Russian ethnographic community, which we have randomly conducted with Sergei Sokolovski at the Russian Academy of Sciences, we have been struck by just how many scholars still take for granted that “collecting data” from within a scholarly institution automatically means “doing science.” To our question, “But what is the point or rationale for that?” the answer was often: “But why does it need a point? It is science, you know; we collect the stuff, and it will become useful to someone or something in the future.”

³ See Sokolovski's interview in Alexei Elfimov, “The State of the Discipline in Russia: Interviews with Russian Anthropologists,” *American Anthropologist* 99 (1997): 779.

that, *tochnye nauki* (“exact sciences”), *estestvennye nauki* (“natural sciences”), *gumanitarnye nauki* (“humanities”), and so on. These attributive adjectives do classify disciplines into sorts, but each and every discipline can still rightfully call itself *nauka* in an unattributed way, and the actual use or non-use of these attributes has been in fact somewhat situational in Russian/Soviet academia. Thus ethnographers and historians are fond of speaking of their disciplines as “sciences.” History textbooks in the Soviet Union, for example, customarily started with the phrase: “*Istoriia—mat’ vsekh nauk*,” that is: “History is the mother of all sciences.” However, physicists would of course not refer to history as a “science.”

The matter is further complicated by the fact that in Russian, all practitioners of *nauka* are called *uchenye* (that is, “learned persons” or “the learned ones,” the remnant of “learned men”—*uchenye muzhi*—of the old tsarist imperial era). Hence there is no “scientist” in physics and “scholar” in literature; they are all *uchenye*. But certainly the understanding of *uchenyi* among the humanities practitioners gravitates toward the *science* end of the spectrum, and this gravitation manifests itself rather saliently in a variety of situations. For instance, the majority of Russian ethnographers, when corresponding in English, will speak of themselves as “scientists” rather than “scholars” (e.g., “I am a scientist working on Buryat folk songs”).

Thus, due to semantic factors alone, Russian ethnographers’ identification with “science” is about as strong today as it was in the context of the nineteenth century’s scientific romanticism. But needless to say, this identification was strengthened and carried along by a range of other factors, from disciplinary competition in the resource-poor academia to the Soviet state’s nationalization of science. In a certain way, the heritage of the nineteenth-century thinking of science was extended onto, and reinforced by, the modern socialist era, which tended to legitimize every brand of knowledge useful to the state under the centralized rubric of “science” and discard the not-so-useful brands from the scientific realm. So if a discipline was allowed to stay in the centralized edifice of university education, it was automatically considered a “science” of some sort—indeed, there would have been a major legitimation problem had this not been the case.

But behind all that romantic scientific ardor stretching back to the outset of the ethnographic enterprise, there lay a rather flat – indeed, not as thrilling as the rhetoric of “science” might imply – trajectory of ethnography’s disciplinary movement over the timeline of Russian/Soviet history, which was sometimes in sync and sometimes at odds with the development

of major ethnographic/anthropological traditions in Western countries. In retrospect, as I have discussed in more detail elsewhere,⁴ the evolution of the Russian ethnographic discipline has, in a sense, run counter to the ways that anthropology has progressed in some Western traditions. Those traditions, over the last century and a half, displayed a fairly distinctive trajectory from the understanding of anthropology as a natural science through the understanding of it as a behavioral and then social science to the understanding of it as one of the humanities. The Russian academic tradition, by contrast, has had ethnography mostly in its humanities incarnation and occasionally, as in the 1920s and sporadically in the late twentieth century, in or near a social-science space. By the end of the twentieth century, when anthropology in the United States was falling from its long-occupied social-science post into the humanities domain, accompanied by department splits and the mutual distancing of “cultural” and “natural” types, ethnography in Russia could not help but experience a certain humanities fatigue. There a contrary urge emerged to free ethnography from the realm of the humanities and move it closer to the social sciences. The proliferation both of typical mid-twentieth-century social anthropological topics and of new institutional departments preferring designations such as “social anthropology” to the more traditional “ethnography” or “ethnology” was a testament to that.

Quite early, from around the time of its institutionalization, ethnography in Russia set itself on the humanities track, despite the *Naturwissenschaft* rhetoric and random attempts to assign it to *obshchestvennye nauki* (social sciences) in the second half of the nineteenth century. If natural history was a genre that was definitely familiar to educated scholars following the development of contemporary Western thought, a clear distinction between social sciences and humanities was not yet shaped at the time. I agree with other historians of Russian ethnography such as Sergei Alymov, who argue that the use of disciplinary rubrics was fairly arbitrary within that period and that one might in fact reasonably talk even about the “absence of a distinct border dividing natural science scholarship and humanities.”⁵ Some held that the latest developments in scholarly inquiry,

⁴ Alexei Elfimov, “Russian Ethnography: Dilemmas of the Present and the Past,” *Anthropological Yearbook of European Cultures* 16 (2007): 77–100; Alexei Elfimov, “Ethnographic Practices and Methods: Some Predicaments of Russian Anthropology,” in *Ethnographic Practice in the Present*, eds. Marit Melhuus, Jon P. Mitchell, and Helena Wulff (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 95–106.

⁵ S.S. Alymov, “Dmitrii Nikolaevich Anuchin: ‘estestvennaia istoriia cheloveka v obshirnom smysle etogo slova’” [Dmitrii Nikolaevich Anuchin. “The natural history of man in

armed with Darwinism, came to erase the dividing line between what was thought of as natural sciences and humanities. Furthermore, a consensus over where the newly promoted “anthropological” and “ethnographic” disciplines were to belong institutionally was increasingly hard to reach. That was reflected by the haphazard fashion in which the disciplines were granted affiliation among faculties of physics and mathematics, history and philology, and geographic units within the first half-century of its existence.⁶

It is worth noting, however, that even in Soviet academia, where ethnography officially settled in the humanities corner, the distinction between social sciences and humanities was still blurred. It would remain blurred through the very end of the Soviet period. The blur was partly due to the acceptance of the ideological dictum issued in the early 1930s stating that the only valid and genuine social science was Soviet Marxist science. Other social sciences could no longer be present in the Soviet system of education. And, as is well known, this signified the official end of “ethnology,” which was censured as a “bourgeois social science,” and the beginning—or, rather, survival—of “ethnography” as a “supplementary historical discipline” charged mostly with the task of illustrating the Marxist scheme of social development, with examples having to do with survivals of the primitive in the modern socialist state.

But the new division was imperfect and inconsistent, given that the “only valid social science” actually had to infringe upon the territory of some humanities fields—namely, history and philosophy (but one might also make a case about the attempts to appropriate language and linguistics, should one recall Nikolai Marr, Stalin, and the heat of the language issue and its relevance to the national identity problem). Thus philosophy, for example, as it stood in the system of Soviet education, was normally thought of as pertaining to the humanities. But in the official language of Soviet ideology, where the word “philosophy” typically appeared accompanied by the adjective “Marxist,” it was spoken of as a social science, for *Marxist philosophy* claimed to not only have discovered true ontological foundations of human knowledge, but also have revealed the fundamental

the broadest sense of the word”], in *Vydaiushchiesia otechestvennye etnologi i antropologi XX veka* [Outstanding national ethnologists and anthropologists], ed. D.D. Tumarkin (Moscow: Nauka, 2004), 24.

⁶ Ibid., p. 22; but also see in part 1 of Marina Mogilner’s account: Marina Mogilner, *Homo Imperii: Istoriia fizicheskoi antropologii v Rossii* [Homo imperii. The history of physical anthropology in Russia] (Moscow: NLO, 2008), or elsewhere in accounts of the institutionalization of Russian ethnography.

laws of social development. History, likewise, technically belonged among the humanities. But in many instances, it was also considered a social science, since *Marxist historical science*, as was officially asserted, was a “science of society” that was, along with Marxist philosophy, responsible for the discovery of fundamental laws of social development.⁷

Ethnography, relegated to a *supplementary* historical discipline, was generally not allowed to participate in the discussion on fundamental laws of social development—until, under Yulian Bromley’s “deanship” in the last quarter of the twentieth century, it began reinventing its conceptual vocabulary and, little by little, trespassing on what we would now call the disciplinary territory of political science.

Thus, much like ethnography in German-speaking countries—which, under the influence of a specific strain of thought stretching from Herder to Wilhelm von Humboldt, had established itself as *Kulturwissenschaft* rather than the *Sozialwissenschaft* that it would become in Great Britain and France—ethnography in Russia, deeply influenced by the example of its German cousin, went in the general direction of humanities rather than social or natural sciences.

* * *

Indeed, Russian ethnography owed much to German scholars, both in the sense of the form it would assume and the content it would focus upon. As Yuri Slezkine puts it, it was Germans who in the eighteenth century brought to Russia “a fully developed science of academic fieldwork (*gelehrte Reise*) complete with such trophies as could be housed in museums, cabinets, galleries, libraries, zoological and botanical gardens, *Kunst-Kammern*, and *Antiquitäten-Zimmer*.”⁸ Furthermore, at the turn of the nineteenth century, Count Sergei Uvarov—the famous president of the Imperial Academy of Sciences and minister of education—supported both the invitation of German scholars to Russian institutions and the travel of Russian “learned men” to Germany. Slezkine provides a very subtle description in the quoted passage, for what German scholars brought to the emerging academic landscape in Russia was actually neither ethnography

⁷ See more on this social-science/humanities predicament in Alexei Elfimov, *Russian Intellectual Culture in Transition: The Future in the Past* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003), chap. 2.

⁸ Yuri Slezkine, “Naturalists versus Nations: Eighteenth-Century Russian Scholars Confront Ethnic Diversity,” *Representations* 47 (1994): 171.

nor geography nor any other particular “discipline” in the contemporary or even the nineteenth-century sense (which in a fair number of aspects still remain about the same). It was the “science of academic fieldwork”—that by which a missionary or collecting or amateur activity would be legitimately turned into a professional occupation under the generic guise of “science.” It was all to become the prerogative of *nauka*, regardless of the particular disciplinary form that the fieldwork-based activity might end up formally taking.

Ethnography was not among the first fields that started taking an institutional academic form. That should not be surprising. Geography, geology, natural resources, including mineral wealth, had become the subject of utmost concern since Peter the Great, whose scientific curiosity had been merged with the interest in geopolitical assets that *nauka* had promised to discover or supply. As Vladimir Vernadskii observed, on the one hand, “all Peter’s expeditions had a practical purpose; one can hardly doubt that it was the search for gold and silver.” On the other hand, Peter “had to know what was beyond the borders of his kingdom,” and he “needed to ascertain exactly and clearly the situation of his state in the global sphere of possibilities.”⁹

These priorities privileged “exact knowledge” in spheres such as geography, cartography, and mineralogy, which in the context of the Russian Empire advanced noticeably faster than areas that could be ascribed to “human” or “social” knowledge. Thus inquiry into matters of law and philosophy, which had been instrumental in triggering the early anthropological interest both in continental European traditions of thought and the Scottish Enlightenment tradition in the British Isles, was lagging behind and under-represented throughout the first century of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences. Therefore, as Han Vermeulen points out, ethnography in Russia only emerged “as a complement to already existing disciplines, in the widely expanding context of the early colonization and exploration of Siberia,” where the need to “describe” in order to be able to “control and tax” drove both mercantilism and scholarly romanticism.¹⁰ The practice of *Völker-Beschreibung* (“ethnography to be”), which, as

⁹ V.I. Vernadskii, “Ocherki po istorii estestvoznaniia v Rossii v XVIII stoletii” [Historical survey of natural history in eighteenth-century Russia], in V.I. Vernadskii, *Trudy po istorii nauki* [Works on the history of science] (Moscow: Nauka, 2002), 226–227.

¹⁰ Han F. Vermeulen, “Anthropology in Colonial Contexts: The Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733–1743) and the Danish-German Arabia Expedition (1761–1767),” in *Anthropology and Colonialism in Asia and Oceania*, eds. Jan van Bremen and Akitoshi Shimizu (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999), 22, 27.

both Vermeulen and Slezkine agree, had been lacking in seventeenth-century Muscovite thinking, was gradually imported into the emerging Russian scholarly activities along with this process.

One facet of the character of “ethnographic science” as it began to take shape in Russia was therefore that it was highly *geographic*. This tilt towards geography recurred throughout the history of Russian/Soviet ethnography, even a century after the emergence of the Ethnographic Division of the Russian Geographical Society (RGO)¹¹ in 1845–1846. The first leaders of the new ethnographic division, Karl von Baer and Nikolai Nadezhdin, both had geographical interests that were ingrained—although to somewhat different ends—in their scholarly outlook. If Baer’s was more within the framework of the general European(ist) natural-science project, Nadezhdin’s was more within the confines of the particular Russian imperial/nationalist geopolitical scholarly romanticism.

Karl von Baer was an interesting figure in the history of Russian ethnography, where he has been formally acknowledged but, in practice, remains underappreciated. (His role in launching the important institutional ethnographic division has traditionally been acknowledged, but none of his writings have ever been reprinted by Russian/Soviet ethnographers, unlike writings by those authors who worked in the vein of ideologically charged Slavophile scholarly romanticism.) Baer was one of the few nineteenth-century Russian scholars—along with, for example, Nikolai Miklukho-Maklai¹² and Dmitrii Anuchin—who saw the forming areas of ethnography and anthropology, on the one hand, as installed within a larger natural-science research endeavor of the “classic” nineteenth-century European type; on the other, as opening the door to what might have hypothetically grown into the Boasian kind of inquiry, with its cultural fusion of geography and language. If one part of Baer the researcher was influenced by Linnaeus, Leibniz, and de Buffon, his other part was intellectually fed by Champollion and Wilhelm von Humboldt.

His intellectual foray into what one might today label “cultural geography” surfaced decades before he came to the RGO’s Ethnography Section. In 1820 he wrote to Adam Johann (Ivan Fedorovich) Krusenstern, “While you are interested in the sea and the coast, I, on the other hand, am

¹¹ It was alternatively abbreviated as IRGO, as indeed it was the Imperial Royal Geographical Society, but the more common abbreviation that has long been used in Russian/Soviet historiographical scholarship is RGO.

¹² His name is often alternately spelled in anthropological literature as Nicholas Miklouho-Maclay.

interested in what moves and takes joy in life in the sea and on the coast.”¹³ This move toward embracing the human element, or toward the “ethnographization” of geography, was important in the context of bitter fights among geographers of the time over whether geographic subject matter should include “peoples” who inhabited geographic spaces. And in 1847, from his chair at the RGO, Baer stated to Fedor Litke, one of the society’s co-founders, that the “geography of Russia will be explored and examined successfully and in the spirit of modern times only in the case if there increasingly spreads out in Russia the newest form of geographical science that considers the shaping and other physical relations of separate parts of the Earth’s surface as the essential condition for social relations between people.”¹⁴

Nadezhdin, too, in his seminal 1846 statement on the scope of ethnography (actually, of “the ethnographic study of the Russian people”—for *that* was gradually to become the preferred scope of ethnography from the end of the 1840s on) singled out geography as the closest relative of ethnography. “In my mind,” posited Nadezhdin, “it is best of all to take for guidance [...] the usage in which ethnography is usually put hand in hand with geography, as a science equal, close, and comparable.”¹⁵ He did draw a line between “organic,” “physiological,” and “spiritual” aspects of “human nature” and reasoned that a “human being” viewed as all other “natural creatures covering the globe” should be studied by geography, but when viewed as the “real master and owner of the globe,” that same human being was the proper subject of ethnography. The goal of that ethnographic science was to observe “all the diverse specificities appearing in humankind” and engage in the typologization and systematization of “natural ranks” (*estestvennye razriady*) occurring in humankind.¹⁶ These “natural ranks” were “peoples”—the category that Nadezhdin had difficulty coming to terms with. This was shown in his usage of the terms *narodnost’* and *narod* to the same end, which he failed to explicate satisfactorily, giving final preference to *narodnost’* and thus putting politics above “science,” for *narodnost’* was the term with the strongest ideological currency at the time, especially in light

¹³ See Baer’s January 23, 1820, letter to Krusenstern in T.A. Lukina, ed. *Perepiska Karla Bera po problemam geografii* [Karl Baer’s correspondence on problems of geography] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1970), 14.

¹⁴ Baer’s December 22, 1847, letter to Litke; *ibid.*, 84.

¹⁵ N.I. Nadezhdin, “Ob etnografiiskom izuchenii narodnosti russkoi” [On the ethnographic exploration of the Russian nationality], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1 (1994): 109.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

of its inclusion in Uvarov's famous state-building nationalistic formula: *pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost'*.¹⁷

Nadezhdin, therefore, did draw a distinction between the natural-science constituent and the kind of typological—and, in a sense, politically applied—humanities research component in his vision of ethnography. However, in his line of thinking, the latter was prioritized, and he stripped both ethnography and geography of the need to search for “scientific laws,” for he held that “both sciences should have the same common outlook—the outlook of ‘descriptive’ sciences.”¹⁸ Indeed, in the new line of practicing ethnography that would continue beyond Nadezhdin, the natural-science constituent would be paid only lip service and would be gradually relegated to *antropologiia*, that is, physical anthropology. *Antropologiia* and *etnografiia*, despite the random efforts to unite the two, would go separate ways in the context of political and general discursive turmoil in late imperial Russia. Their diverging paths of institutionalization would reflect both scholarly disagreements and the clash of paradigms (such as Darwinian versus pre-Darwinian), and social backgrounds and ideological standings of the new disciplines' practitioners. As Russia's development in the latter half of the nineteenth century polarized everything and everybody into Slavophiles and Westernizers, conservatives and progressives, and a whole gamut of other camps, the division between *antropologiia* and *etnografiia*, too, was multifaceted and developed in too many ways to be understood as a split rather than a union.¹⁹

Thus four decades after Nadezhdin's programmatic statement, a newly established ethnographic journal, *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, just a year after its launch, proceeded to declare that it was dropping physical anthropological subject matter altogether. The 1890 editorial statement, most likely written by Nikolai Yanchuk, further made it clear that the journal's

¹⁷ Often roughly translated as “Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality,” this is known as the “Uvarov triad” expounding the proclaimed principle of new state-building in nineteenth-century Russia. It entailed adherence to the Orthodox Christian Church as assuming primacy in the religious landscape of the Russian Empire; loyalty to the autocratic tsarist regime as the only legitimate power-bearer; and recognition of the state-founding role of the Russian nation. The term *narodnost'*, as the last part of the triad, is broader semantically than “nationality” or “nation” and embraces the senses of “the people,” “nationality,” and “national spirit”/“people's spirit,” and has a reference in the German *Volksgeist* and *Volkstum* ideas that ideologically influenced much of nineteenth-century (and, arguably, twentieth-century) Russian ethnography.

¹⁸ Nadezhdin, “Ob etnograficheskoi izuchenii,” 109.

¹⁹ The trend and the context are analyzed in detail in Marina Mogilner's recent book, *Homo Imperii*.

scholarly mission would be driven by the traditionally accepted ethnographic programs, and its field of vision would be confined by and large to “the bounds of Russia, i.e., the Empire with all its peripheries.”²⁰

The task of describing and classifying *narodnosti* populating the geographical space of the empire with particular attention to the status, origin, and cultural makeup of the Russian people—which, in Yanchuk’s text, was already elevated to the rank of *narod* and thus set apart from other *narodnosti* of the Empire—became the major rationale for the “ethnographic science.” Indeed, Yanchuk nearly apologized for the fact that, in its first year, *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* had given “too much room to the foreign [*inorodcheskii*] element to the detriment of the Russian one.” Furthermore, he added, as much as the editors “would wish to regard any people [*narodnost*] within the limits of Russia with the same attention,” they still would have to ascribe that wish to the “disposition to diversity that is often detrimental for a serious and positive science.”²¹

The “serious and positive science,” as it was rhetorically posited, in fact became a properly established humanities discipline—descriptive, interpretive, and classificatory—that was politically influenced and ideologically engaged (not in the “grand” way, but in the regular way that most humanities disciplines are). Nadezhdin’s line persisted, and Baer’s line, which, if anything, had been more “scientific,” was neglected. Certainly, Baer’s ethnographic vision was more universalistic and just not Russian-centric enough to be extremely popular in the emerging Russian scholarly circles of the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, already in the first year of the RGO’s operation, in a letter to Litke, Baer complained in passing about “overexaggerated Russianism” within the society.²² But as the general paradigm of nineteenth-century ethnography was in many ways imported, replicated, and conserved in the context of later Soviet ethnographic practices, the attitude to the kind of scholarship that Baer represented would change little. In 1946, N.N. Stepanov, reviewing the impact of the RGO in the journal *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, issued the same all-too-familiar Slavophile judgment of Baer: “With all the scientific advantages of Baer’s line, that line was little connected to the life of the leading social circles of the time.”²³

²⁰ “Ot redaktsii” [From the editors], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1 (1890): vi.

²¹ *Ibid.*, vi–vii.

²² Baer’s letter to Litke of July 9, 1846, in *Perepiska Karla Bera*, 71.

²³ N.N. Stepanov, “Russkoe geograficheskoe obshchestvo i etnografiia (1845–1861)” [The Russian geographical society and ethnography (1845–1861)]. *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 4

Nevertheless, the foundational blend of geography and ethnography that both Baer and Nadezhdin had promoted was digested and carried further in recurring attempts to substantiate either ethnography's subject matter or its disciplinary positioning, or to claim some theoretical territories, whether in inter- or intra-disciplinary competition. The idea of cultural types as meaningfully (that is, in a scientifically accountable way) dispersed through geographical space reappeared variously in Soviet ethnography, such as, for example, in the theory of historical-ethnographic areas (*istoriko-etnograficheskie oblasti*) and economic-cultural types (*khoziaistvenno-kul'turnye tipy*) expounded by Maksim Levin and Nikolai Cheboksarov in the 1940s and 1950s and further followed and developed by some scholars, such as Gennadii Markov, up through the 1980s.

Needless to say, in the research context after the *Kulturkreislehre* School and Culture Area studies carried by Boasians (as well as after the 1917 October Revolution in Russia), these theories needed no longer a reference to Baer, Nadezhdin, or the like. They had other, "bourgeois," opponents to tackle, and other, "Marxist-Leninist," genealogies to trace themselves back to. And so Levin and Cheboksarov proceeded from the belief that, to the age-old ethnographic question of "affinities" and "differences" that we observe among peoples, "bourgeois ethnography" failed to find an answer, though it made various attempts. Contrary to the "agnosticism that manifests itself in contemporary bourgeois science and the tendency to deny any conformity to laws in the history of human society," the "Marxist science has revealed [that conformity] in the development of human society and opened the path for the genuinely scientific explanation of the question under consideration."²⁴

It is odd that the authors gave a slight nod to Clark Wissler's attempts at drawing culture areas and expressed their regret that "unfortunately, the further development of American ethnography went a different way, which has led the reactionary fraction of American ethnographers to the doctrine of 'patterns of culture,' scientifically futile and opposed to the

(1946): 191–192. I am not talking here about the evaluation of Baer's significance on the physical anthropology front, which was more positive, as in Maksim Levin's article "Antropologicheskie raboty K.M. Bera" [K.M. Baer's anthropological works], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 1 (1954): 107–131. However, Levin too could not help mentioning that Baer "in his political views stood far away from the revolutionary wing of the Russian science": *ibid.*, 131.

²⁴ M.G. Levin and N.N. Cheboksarov, "Khoziaistvenno-kul'turnye tipy i istoriko-etnograficheskie oblasti" [Economic-cultural types and historical-ethnographic regions], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 4 (1955): 3–4.

spirit of humanism.”²⁵ (Perhaps Wissler, as an “undervalued” figure among the Boasians, was found worthy of this kind of rhetorical favoritism—“our enemy’s enemy is our friend”—that was typical of much of Soviet scholarly writing. Wissler’s views on eugenics and race, which would dismay Boas the humanist, were apparently irrelevant in that scheme of arguing.)

In essence, the “genuinely scientific explanation” that the theory proposed was a revamped version of the same culture-areas and cultural-patterns argument, a bit distanced from the idea of the direct geographical determination of culture through the introduction of *khoziaistvenno-kul’turnyi tip* as a kind of economic agency that brought productive forces (*proizvoditel’nye sily*) and production relations (*proizvodstvennye otnosheniia*) to the forefront according to the requirements of Soviet Marxist social science.

An even stronger reminder of the foundational connection between ethnography and geography would resurface just a decade later in a programmatic statement by Solomon Bruk, Viktor Kozlov, and Maksim Levin, “On the Subject and Goals of Ethnogeography.”²⁶ Partly to strengthen what they thought was ethnography’s real place as a “science,” partly to stake out a claim to a new subdivision in the discursive and institutional structure of the discipline, and partly to earn some scholarly capital, the authors came forward to advocate the establishment of *etnogeografiia*—the idea that had been nurtured by Russian/Soviet ethnographer Waldemar (Vladimir) Bogoraz earlier in the 1920s. This time, to make their point, the authors did find it necessary to recall the RGO. But, as if the recourse was not rhetorically strong enough, they resorted to invoking Herodotus and tracing the ontological connection between ethnography and geography down to the ancient times.

On a lighter note, one might muse that mentions of Herodotus have usually been resorted to in our discipline by those who are either incurably romantic or very desperate. The reader can decide what the authors’ intention might have been in this case, but they found they needed to claim Herodotus as the “father of ethnography and geography,” not “just history.” “Between ethnography and geography,” the authors pointed out, “there exist close ties going back to ancient times, when the sprouts of ethnographic and geographic knowledge were merged in a single science.”²⁷

²⁵ Ibid., 3.

²⁶ S.I. Bruk, V.I. Kozlov, and M.G. Levin, “O predmete i zadachakh etnogeografii” [On the subject and tasks of ethnogeography], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 1 (1963): 11–25.

²⁷ Ibid., 11.

And a decade later, in the 1970s, ethnographer Viktor Kozlov and geographer Vadim Pokshishevskii would still insist on the “centuries-long interaction of ethnography with geography” that could be traced back to the “era of great ancient civilizations” and that revealed the connections between these disciplines that (and this comes as a surprise of sorts) “essentially have not yet been considered in detail.”²⁸

My intention is not to expose these scholars to ridicule but to stress that it is far from clear *which* ethnography—the nineteenth-century or twentieth-century version—was more romantic, scientifically naive, and uncertain of its own *raison d'être*. What is clear, though, is that both in Russia were firmly established and practiced in the humanities vein, despite the ever-present scientific rhetoric ingrained in the verbal use of *nauka*.

* * *

There was, however, another facet to ethnography that strengthened and completed its humanities make-up. That facet was *philological*. During the entire period of its shaping and becoming, ethnography in Russia leaned heavily on philology for its, so to say, underlying philosophical base and consequently in its methodological—typological, classificatory, and general heuristic—tools. That vector of the discipline's development was set partly due to the substantial influence of the German eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophical and philological tradition, and partly because language was the phenomenon under ultimate scrutiny in Russia in that era. After all, it was the era of formation and intellectual codification of the Russian literary language.

In a certain sense, language was the measure of everything. It was the national identity indicator and the index of imperial hierarchies; it was the social distinction marker and the sign of cultural unity; it was the expression of the people's spirit and the knife slicing people into nearly evolutionary layers; it was the means to be modern and the device to identify the backward. Indeed, in the context of the era, for the educated Russian nobility the fine art of writing was indicative of the fine skill of reasoning, and in a way was a more profound criterion of the cultural stage of evolution than a physical anthropological parameter could be. In fact, within that paradigm of thinking, physical anthropological criteria were somewhat problematic, insofar as they were equally applicable to both the “cul-

²⁸ V.I. Kozlov and V.V. Pokshishevskii, “Etnografiia i geografiia” [Ethnography and geography], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 1 (1973): 3.

tured” and “uncultured” social strata. Such criteria threatened the social base on which Russian imperial scholarship had subsisted until about the middle of the nineteenth century, for they implied placing the nobility and the peasants on an equal footing—which, according to the ethnographic discourse resting on the language criteria, could be logically positioned on different stages of evolution. Marina Mogilner, in her recent account of the development of physical anthropology in Russia, discusses many of the emerging discrepancies between disciplinary subjects as they were understood in *etnografiia* and *antropologiia*, including the curious predicament reflected in the scholarly analysis of the Pushkin issue (with its exemplary clash of the accepted view of culture and the anthropological criteria) by prominent Russian ethnographer and anthropologist Dmitrii Anuchin.²⁹

The generation of the language of scientific discourse and the language of fine literature in many ways went hand in hand in Russia. As Vernadskii notes, the eighteenth-century Russian Academy of Sciences took an active part in debating and setting the standards for fine arts of literary expression, and “men of science” engaged in both advancing poetry and writing scientific papers, which were often published in the Academy’s periodicals side by side.³⁰ A separate Section of the Russian Language and Philology would be established at the Academy of Sciences later in the nineteenth century. The connection between language, natural science, and social development was understood by many as indissoluble. As Anton Prokopovich-Antonskii—who, characteristically, taught natural history at Moscow University and chaired the Society of Admirers of Russian Literature in the early nineteenth century—put it, “As the natural language emerges, talents in the people open up; as the speech gains certain rules of its own, geniuses arrive; as the words attain exact meaning, social laws become distinct and clear and state rule asserts itself on the inviolable ground.”³¹

The famous Society of Admirers of Russian Literature (*Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti*), which Prokopovich-Antonskii chaired in its first decade of existence, was a very influential organization that would set and censure intellectual trends and provide critical reflections and

²⁹ Mogilner, *Homo Imperii*, 216–236.

³⁰ V.I. Vernadskii, “Ocherki po istorii Akademii nauk” [Historical survey of the Academy of Sciences], in *Trudy po istorii nauki*, 328.

³¹ R.N. Kleimeneva, *Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti 1811–1930* [Society of Admirers of Russian Literature, 1811–1930] (Moscow: Academia, 2002), 47.

uncritical dogmas over more than a century of activity. It collaborated with ethnographers, folklore scholars, and archaeologists. And among its actual members we find a range of prominent ethnographers from Vsevolod Miller to Vladimir Lamanskii, from the RGO's second ethnography head, Nikolai Nadezhdin, to *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*'s editor, Nikolai Yanchuk.

Not only was language seen as the most potent "means of influencing the social consciousness" among the society's members, but it was also viewed as the terrain hiding the mysteries of *narodnost*'—the concealed foundations of the people's cultural spirit and Russian/Slavic evolutionary unity. In the search for those mysteries, as Raisa Kleimionova points out, the scholarly fields of history and philosophy were commonly viewed as subordinate to philology and language. One of the society's early chairs, Alexei Merzliakov, who stated that "the rules of language are so deep and so far removed from human comprehension that centuries and the efforts of many learned men were hardly able to ascertain them," held that the evolution of language proceeded through three stages that mirrored the evolution of society. And Mikhail Pogodin, one of its later chairs, emphasized that language was the "token and guarantee" of the "people's spiritual development" and "its neglect was the sign of rudeness and savagery."³²

This valuing, or overvaluing, of language was by no means uncommon in the early history of ethnography and anthropology anywhere. So Nadezhdin was hardly original in declaring that "to date, no effort or work by ethnographers has discovered a truer and handier way of distinguishing and designating 'peoples' as through their 'language.'"³³ If anything was original, it is perhaps just for how many years to come the mainstream ethnographic thinking in Russian/Soviet academia would try to retain conceptual adherence to that canonical idea. That the "word" represented by itself the "essence of human nature" was, Nadezhdin argued, a "truth indisputable and recognized by everybody." He went so far as to conclude that "the notion of 'human being' is considered always and everywhere to be absolutely equal to the notion of 'verbal creature' [*sushchestva slovesnogo*]." "One can therefore say for sure that the 'language of a people' has been and will remain forever the main token and the main mark of *narodnost*', hence, the main object calling upon itself the attention of ethnography."³⁴

³² Ibid., 49, 179–180.

³³ Nadezhdin, "Ob etnografiheskom izuchenii," 110.

³⁴ Ibid., 110–111.

That was again his programmatic statement at the RGO's 1846 annual meeting, which focused the goal of ethnography on the "ethnographic study of Russian *narodnost*" in particular and set the mainstream ethnographic agenda for years to come. However, Nadezhdin's appeal to language was not as "scientifically" sophisticated as it was romantically and ideologically honest and blunt. The prominent Russian thinker and revolutionary Nikolai Chernyshevskii, who himself believed philology was a tool opening the window onto the past, equivocally commented on the mixture of scholarship and literature in Nadezhdin who "went farther than Schelling and approached, by the power of independent thinking, Hegel, whom, as all evidence indicates, he did not study."³⁵ All or nearly all foundations constituting social life, according to Chernyshevskii, had been generated at its very beginning in the "most remote periods" that had left behind nothing but survivals and some "general and obscure clues that remained intact in language. That is why lately [...] attention has been drawn to *historical philology*, which attempts to guess the character of the most ancient periods of historical development and explain the original appearance and native meaning of notions and institutions that continue to dominate in a modified form to this day."³⁶

Oddly, Chernyshevskii sounds here more ethnographic than one of Russian ethnography's formal founders does. But the other founder, Baer, who, unlike Nadezhdin, was less focused on the enigma of Russian language as a scholar (as much of what he wrote was in German) and was looking into wider comparative contexts, demonstrated a no less magnetic enchantment with the phenomenon of language and the inquisitive power of philology. In his book *The Human in the Natural-Historical Respect*, Baer wrote, "We would do better to demarcate peoples by distinctions in their languages, for then we can best of all understand what stage of development each people stands on in comparison to others."³⁷ If Nadezhdin's promotion of language was ideologically and nationalistically driven, Baer's had to do with a humanistic move away from "racial" classifications. Baer, who was particularly influenced by that specific German strain of thought stretching from Herder to Wilhelm von Humboldt, also

³⁵ See Stepanov, "Russkoe geograficheskoe obshchestvo," 193.

³⁶ G. Vinogradov, "Etnografiia v krugu nauchnykh interesov Chernyshevskogo" [Ethnography within the scientific interests of Chernyshevskii], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 3 (1940): 38–39.

³⁷ K. Baer, *Chelovek v estestvenno-istoricheskom otnoshenii* [The human in the natural-historical respect] (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia K. Vingebera, 1851), 132.

was sometimes surprisingly proto-Sapirian in his statements connecting language, culture, and thought, as in his reasoning that “language is so important for mental development, for the way of thinking is already embraced within it; this is why we believe that a tribe adopting another language becomes another people.”³⁸

However, making a liberal move away from the dangers of ranking cultures and people by their physical characteristics, he still remained an educated European of his time, and the level of mental development was, in his view, indicative of a level of evolution. And language was enmeshed in it all. If, on the one hand, he could state that we cannot “consider different peoples as unchanging and take [physical and morphological] qualities distinguishing them to be inherent” and the “volume of the skull by no means presents a measure of the high spiritual development,” on the other, he could allow cultural and intellectual factors to figure as valid classifying criteria and argued, for example, that “in respect of the high spiritual development, one should draw a distinction between Oceanians and Malaysians.” He was favorably disposed to the Oceanians, for “Oceanians, more than any other tribe, are capable of apprehending European education. In this, they are quite different from Australians, who from the very beginning received the Europeans with hatred and distrust.” Or else he could point out that “the mental abilities of Semites are sharply manifested in those countries in the East where they are mixed with Turks. Semites are livelier than Turks and learn everything faster than them.”³⁹

Language, and its coherence as reflected in the consistency of its grammar, was key in deciphering the riddles of cultural differences and cultural achievements. That is why Chinese culture was a complete puzzle to Baer. The comparative look at the grammar of the Chinese language showed Baer that it was “still in its infant state, just like Indo-Chinese languages.” But that led to a theoretical contradiction and deadlock. “But why is the Chinese language so little developed when the people speaking it were educated in ancient times and cannot by any means be called savage? I admit that it is impossible to explain clearly and thoroughly this strange occurrence.”⁴⁰

Baer did not advance methods of philological inquiry past the classification of peoples, or peoples’ groups, in which the “sixth group,” representing the “Western peoples,” logically occupied the final place, as if

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 94, 120, 140, 143, 214.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 207.

corresponding to its uppermost place on the cultural evolutionary scale. This group—*Narody zapadnye*—unlike others, was also given the subtitle of *Narody sovershenstvuiushchiesia* (that is, “progressing peoples,” or “improving peoples”). The other groups included the peoples that he occasionally referred to as *nedopodvizhnye* (“not mobile enough,” “not sufficiently active”). The “sixth group” was the “only one that engendered genuine science and [...] genuine art.” The short description of the “sixth group” was actually rather amusing in its phrasing: “We ascribe to the latter group the inhabitants of Southwest Asia, Europe, and North Africa, with the exception of Finns and Turks who live in those countries. Thus this group almost perfectly corresponds to Blumenbach’s Caucasian breed [*poroda*], but calling this group Caucasian would be rather groundless in our time, because we do not know any single big people that came down from the Caucasus.”⁴¹ (Baer actually used the expression *soshel s Kavkaza*, that is, “came down” or “descended” from the Caucasus.)

Andre Gingrich, when discussing the path that the Herderian legacy took in the ethnography (or ethnographies) of German-speaking countries, makes a number of points that are certainly applicable to the context in which early Russian ethnography matured, especially given the direct influence of German scholarship on Russian learning trends. “From the outset it was within this vision of unity through diversity,” writes Gingrich, “that Herder’s concept of *Kultur* was embedded. It emphasized language, customs, and mentalities in a particularistic manner, but it did not include any consideration of race or other allegedly eternal, timeless properties.”⁴² This is the way Baer more theoretically, and Nadezhdin and his followers more ideologically, understood the domain that ethnography was to study and to represent. However, as Gingrich notes, the Herderian tradition was twisted and modified, and Johann Georg Hamann, for example, “broke with Herder because he thought that Herder remained too close to Enlightenment reasoning.”⁴³

It would be fair to say that the German intellectual tradition as it was appropriated in, or adapted to, nineteenth-century Russian ethnography was also twisted and modified. It visibly oscillated in the Russian imperial context between the more relativist and the more absolutist vector,

⁴¹ Ibid., 210, 231.

⁴² Andre Gingrich, “The German-Speaking Countries,” in *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology*, by F. Barth et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 73.

⁴³ Ibid., 68–69.

perhaps leaning towards the latter, but this is a theme for a separate study. Yet Herder's view that the spirit of a culture is embedded in its language was digested in both currents and remained the foundational motive in the bulk of mainstream ethnographic works where *Volksgeist*—*narodnyi dukh*, or *dukh naroda*—became the center of attention, or at any rate the underlying premise of the ethnographic inquiry.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the *Volksgeist* idea was particularly reinforced by the strengthening of Slavophile sentiments in Russian scholarly circles and assumed a multidimensional ideological configuration. It was apparent in the shape of *narodnyi dukh*, but it was also present in the guise of a specific idea of "duty to the people," which would actually survive in the intellectual milieu through the end of the Soviet period. In ethnography, it signified the responsibility of the scholar, as a representative of the "modern" intellectual culture, to penetrate deep into the spirit of the "archaic" peasant, living nearby but actually in a parallel temporal frame, and reveal the true core connection that made both "Russian," "Slavic," or possessors of some "shared culture."

This goal was ideologically important due to the strong intellectual and political drive to bridge—or else emphasize, for whatever purpose—the gap between *Kulturvölker* and *Naturvölker* that was most saliently manifested in the Russian context as a split between the elites and the peasants. Scholars have variously argued that that split in Russia was more pronounced, or at least perceived as more consequential, than the distance between different ethnic groups in the Russian Empire. The split, as Mogilner argues, was instrumental in setting the priorities for ethnography and physical anthropology in Russia, since it stood in the way of the concept of "race," for placing both the elites and the peasants under the same taxonomical unit was, again, ideologically awkward.⁴⁴ But the same split, if indeed it stood in the way of *antropologiya*, essentially opened a way to the *ethnographic* conceptualization of the peasant as the Other. In Russia the peasant assumed the role of the "savage within," and this had a significant consequence for the direction of ethnographic thought, inasmuch as ethnography appropriated, and by and large retained the focus on, that "savage within" and never came to conceptually confront a "savage without." By its scholarly, or "scientific," ethos, Russian ethnography remained much closer to *Volkskunde* than *Völkerkunde*.

The paradigmatic object for the ethnographic inquiry was thus set, and it was both "scientific" and "moral," both "close" and "far away," both

⁴⁴ Mogilner, *Homo Imperii*, 9.

“own” and “alien.” As Slezkine concisely put it, “the cultural elite of Moscow and St. Petersburg discovered the noble savage to whom they could wholly devote themselves—the Russian peasant. It ought to be idolized, studied, or rescued; it was the keeper of genuine values, the inner kernel of a searching intellectual and the savior of Russia (and possibly of the universe).”⁴⁵ For a historiographer looking to examine narrative devices and conceptual assumptions of the type of ethnographic writing that followed that paradigm, there is a vast volume of literature to draw examples from. Ethnographic articles of the period would commonly state that an “out-of-the-way corner of the Tambov region [...] lives within some detached and isolated world”; and “city culture has not touched it, and even trade points such as bazaars and fairs—these common conductors of civilization—did not exert their influence here. Faithful to tradition, the peasants firmly hold on to the precepts of ancient times and jealously guard the customs of the centuries against the waves of ‘novelty.’”⁴⁶ Or: “The social and domestic life of the state peasants in many ways differed from the contemporary one.”⁴⁷

The focus on the peasant would reappear with new force in the Soviet period, stripped of some nineteenth-century imperial concerns but loaded with new ones. Whatever place the savage peasant might occupy in the chain of being, to use Slezkine’s expression once again, what mattered most now was its place in the structure of the state. From the pages of the newly relaunched journal *Etnografiia*, headed by academician Sergei Ol’denburg, who pointed to “new life” and “new survivals” to cope with after the 1917 revolution, David Zolotarev attempted to formulate the new *raison d’être* for ethnography in the Soviet era. “The study of customary life of the peasant population, which had been conducted mainly by ethnographers before, has presently begun to draw the attention of the widest social circles. Since the state power has recognized the special significance of the village in our country’s life [...] and, in connection with the national policy, there has emerged a particular interest in connection with the culture of national minorities of our multitribal [*mnogoplemennogo*] union [...], it is only the researcher-ethnographer who is capable of

⁴⁵ Yuri Slezkine, *Arkticheskie zerkala: Rossiia i малыe narody Severa* [Arctic mirrors: Russia and the small peoples of the north] (Moscow: NLO, 2008), 96–97.

⁴⁶ A. Zvonkov, “Ocherk verovanii krest’ian Elatomskogo uezda, Tambovskoi gubernii” [Survey of peasant belief in the Elatomskii uezd, government of Tambov], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 2 (1889): 63.

⁴⁷ V.N. Bondarenko, “Ocherki Kirsanovskogo uezda, Tambovskoi gub” [Survey of the Kirsanovskii uezd, government of Tambov], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 3 (1890): 62.

collecting and understanding data on everyday life, on the needs and abilities of the population, on people's traditions, on those roots from which the life of the people grows."⁴⁸

The "scientific" task was yet again that of collecting, describing, and typologizing. Anuchin remarked that "ethnography cannot be a purely descriptive science," and Shternberg cautioned that "if one should hold that it [ethnography, A.E.] must describe groups of peoples, then it won't be a science yet. That would be applied knowledge, and a sum of descriptions not tied to anything."⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the encompassing paradigm of ethnographic research as it was practiced remained firmly descriptive and classificatory. Curiously enough, Shternberg himself had a vision of ethnography as a distinctive humanities discipline and made efforts to dissociate it from the science project.⁵⁰

The formal institutionalization of ethnography within the structure of faculties of history, which came after the 1930s, sealed the humanities makeup of the discipline. The *Volkskunde*-inspired focus on folklore, material culture, survivals, and oddities, and the particular distribution of all that in the geographical space, became the mainstream occupation for many generations of ethnographers.

* * *

Yet ethnography did attempt a number of forays—some more and some less ambitious—into social-science territory. Thus, starting around the last decade of the nineteenth century, a stronger interest emerged in studying peasant customs in the light of legal practices. Thus a certain move was made toward conceptualizing "custom" as adhering to the institution of law, rather than manifesting *narodnyi dukh*, that is, the "people's spirit." Despite a fairly substantial body of research in that area around the turn of the century, it did not lead to the shaping of a theoretically mature tradition comparable to the anthropology of law, as crystallized, for example, in twentieth-century American anthropology. To the present day,

⁴⁸ D.A. Zolotarev, "Voprosy izucheniia byta derevni SSSR," *Etnografiia* 1–2 (1926): 45–46.

⁴⁹ D.N. Anuchin, "O zadachakh russkoi etnografii" [On the tasks of Russian ethnography], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1 (1889): 28; N.I. Gagen-Torn, "Leningradskaia etnograficheskaiia shkola v dvadtsatye gody" [Leningrad ethnographic school in the twenties], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 2 (1971): 137.

⁵⁰ See Sergei Kan, *Lev Shternberg: Anthropologist, Russian Socialist, Jewish Activist* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 235, 265, 272–273.

iuridicheskaiia antropologiia (“legal anthropology”) remains a very narrowly focused subfield promoted by a small community of practitioners.

Further, the 1910s and particularly the 1920s were the time when various social-science models were tested and applied, if not in practice, then in thinking. The heated discussions about the very designation of the discipline—*etnografiia* or *etnologiiia*—pointed up the disagreement over whether it was to go the humanities or social-science way. On the one hand, it was the eclectic period of social constructivism, which promoted the ideas of sculpting social life and subordinating it to various scientifically charted regulations. Viacheslav Tenishev’s attempt at launching the *Etnograficheskoe biuro* (Ethnographic Bureau) in 1897–1901 was an early example of remaking ethnography into a scientifically applied discipline in the service of state and social life regulation. Large-scale “country” and “city” applied research programs envisaged by Tenishev were indeed an attempt to establish ethnography as a commercialized social science; and Tenishev’s general vision of the mission of new social science was Comte writ large. Human needs and interests were to be ordered and administered, and ethnography was largely a means of providing proper social data for proper social accounting.

On the other hand, it was a time of intense theoretical borrowings, and various ideas developed by contemporary Western ethnographers and anthropologists were imported, circulated, and played with. In the works and activities of a number of prominent scholars, such as Shternberg, Bogoraz, or Shirokogorov, there was a noticeable tendency toward shifting the subject and understanding of ethnographic research to be more in line with the trends in Western scholarly traditions. Sergei Shirokogorov, whose vision of the discipline was perhaps more social scientific than either Shternberg’s or Bogoraz’s, was one of the early proponents of accepting *ethnos* as the foundational idea providing both the defined object and the theoretical posture of ethnography (although the idea was also supported, in a slightly alternate manner, by Nikolai Mogilianskii). Shirokogorov’s views were broad and diffuse in terms of theoretical influences. The concepts that he expounded were in a way configurationist (sometimes recalling Kroeber’s notions of configurations of cultural growth) and in a way morphological (sometimes evoking thinkers like Frobenius). *Ethnos* for him was the form within which human cultural elements were born, grew, and died.⁵¹ And he was giving the discipline a

⁵¹ Shirokogorov’s work actually contains a number of different definitions of *ethnos*. For a review, see, for example, A.M. Kuznetsov, “S.M. Shirokogorov i problemy issledo-

social Darwinist bent, largely alien to nineteenth-century Russian ethnography, for he spoke about the struggle and the reasons that one *ethnos* would give way or yield to another. Some of these ideas would later be picked up by theoreticians such as Lev Gumilev. Shirokogorov is traditionally credited with supplying the term *ethnos*, though arguably not its content, to later Soviet ethnography.

In a certain sense, an attempt to enter the social-science domain should also be seen in the once famous, now infamous, *etnogenez* studies in Soviet ethnography. Ideologically prepared by Nikolai Marr's ambitious effort to turn linguistics into a universal discipline covering both historical and sociological dimensions of inquiry, studies of "ethnogenesis" in Soviet ethnography from the 1940s to the 1960s were by no means positioned as pure "historical" or "ethnographic" research. They increasingly claimed the universalistic disciplinary space (within the Marxist-Leninist social science zone) offering the "scientifically proven" perspective on the ontological principles of social, cultural, and ethnic development. Seizing at first the opportunity to be helpful—once again, but now in the new social and political context—in the mission of scientifically substantiating the priority of Slavic roots and the foundational role of the Russian nation, ethnography gradually proceeded to expand the scope of applicability of *etnogenez* methods onto the wider cultural map of the world.⁵² The advancement of *etnogenez* research was an effort to construct a theoretical taxonomy of evolutionary ways, at a time when ethnography was not expected to participate in grand theoretical debates.⁵³

vaniia etnosa" [S.M. Shirokogorov and problems in the exploration of *ethnos*], in *Izbrannye raboty i materialy*, by S.M. Shirokogorov (Vladivostok: Izdatel'stvo Dal'nevostochnogo universiteta, 2002), 3–34.

⁵² See, for instance, Viktor Shnirelman's account of the development of *etnogenez* studies in the mid-twentieth century: V.A. Shnirelman, "Zlokliucheniia odnoi nauki: etnogeneticheskie issledovaniia i stalinskaia natsional'naia politika" [Misfortunes of a discipline: Ethnogenetic research and Stalinist national politics], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 3 (1993): 52–68.

⁵³ Indeed, as Sergei Tolstov boldly presented the new mission of ethnography: "The task before us is a big one: to approach in a new way the enormous body of ethnographic data and sources that have hardly been utilized in order to reconstruct the history of the peoples of the USSR and develop truly scientific constructions." Tolstov is quoted in A.M. Reshetov, "Zhurnal rossiskikh etnografov 75 let" [Seventy-fifth anniversary of the journal of Russian ethnographers], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 4 (2001): 34. What is curious is the rhetoric of "reconstruction of peoples' history," which would remain in Soviet ethnography for quite a long time, while in fact the task appeared thoroughly fused with the intellectual effort to *construct* (rather than *reconstruct*) the new evolu-

But the heyday (according to some) and the nadir (according to others) of ethnography as a social science was the late Soviet period of its development, usually associated with the administrative and arguably intellectual leadership of Yulian Bromley (as the director of the Institute of Ethnography, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, from 1966 to 1989) and the (re)appropriation of the *ethnos* concept as the central disciplinary tool. The reintroduction of *ethnos* into the ethnographic discourse had many far-reaching consequences, from theoretical and rhetorical shifts to the intellectual and administrative branching of the discipline, which witnessed the emergence of an array of research subfields during the 1970s and 1980s. The pattern of making these subfields (as virtually all of them started with *ethno-* in their designations: *etnosotsiologiia*, *etnopsikhologiia*, etc.) indeed indicates that the concept was a “facilitator for thinking” in some ways. One could argue that it finally supplied the discipline with a “named” object that up until then had appeared in multiple guises and incarnations from *narodnyi dukh* to *kul'tura* to *byt* and so forth. But it also burdened the discipline with a number of conceptual dogmas, some of which would later prove increasingly hard to shake off. *Ethnos*, having emerged as a theoretical notion, was soon reified and began to be perceived literally almost as a “living entity” that was born, moved, thought, and had a will and agency like that of an individual or, at best, countable small group.

Much confusion was added by Bromley himself, who ventured into further scholastic elaboration on *ethnos*'s derivative forms, such as *etnikos* and *etnosotsial'nyi organism* (“ethno-social organism”). A fair number of Bromley's followers and opponents participated in making this scholasticism still more convoluted and theoretically far-fetched. This contradictory phase of Soviet ethnography has drawn considerable attention recently and will undoubtedly continue to be discussed because it has left behind a heritage that, fortunately or unfortunately, lingers on. It would take a book to discuss it in any acceptable depth and detail; I only wish to emphasize here that the “Bromley period” in the history of Soviet/Russian ethnography has marked the most pronounced attempt to define ethnography as a social science, rather than a humanities, discipline. Indeed, its reach increasingly spread in the directions of political science, sociology, and psychology. The ensuing institutional renaming of *ethnography* to *ethnology*, which became situationally possible in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, was a formal testament to it.

tionary taxonomy of peoples. This is surprisingly reflected in Tolstov's fallback onto the term “constructions” (*postroeniia*) at the end of the sentence.

The discipline was now positioned as rather well-rounded and universalistic; it no longer seemed “purely descriptive” or “complementary to history,” as it had both the traditional descriptive and the sociologically informed theoretical aspect revolving around the core notion of *ethnos*, which was not known to other disciplines. “As for the future of ethnography,” Bromley declared in the last years of the Soviet era, “the understanding of it as a science of *ethnoses* does not leave us room for pessimism. For as long as there exist *ethnoses*—peoples—ethnography will retain its research object.”⁵⁴

This particular logic (“if there is *ethnos*, then there must be ethnography”) was criticized afterwards. But some commenters, notably Andrei Elez, have also argued that the whole attempt to remake ethnography from a descriptive humanities discipline into a theoretically ambitious social science was a complete disaster. Elez—a philosopher by training and ethnographer by chance, a sharp mind and staunch Soviet Marxist by persuasion who wrote his book *The Critique of Ethnology*, as Swift put it, “to vex the world rather than divert it”—expressed what has been perhaps the harshest criticism of Russian ethnography’s venture into social-science territory put in writing within the last half-century.⁵⁵ His account raises all kinds of questions about the discipline’s conceptual coherence and social scientific claims. Though some of the book’s premises can be disputed, in my view, it is hard to disagree with the contention that Soviet ethnography’s (or *ethnology*’s) social-science game, scholastically centered on the category of *ethnos*, was largely a failure.

Despite the social-science involvement, *etnografiia*, even when it was renamed *etnologiiia* and got a nominal raise in its academic status, still remained predominantly attached to the humanities subdivision in the actual structure of new Russian (or post-Soviet) education. Furthermore, in terms of pedagogy and disciplinary training, little has changed in *etnologiiia* as compared to the *etnografiia* of the older days. An important detail to note—particularly concerning “scientific” or even “social scientific” claims—is that methodological training in both has been nowhere near what one might qualify as “science” in any sense. “Any methods do” and “use your common sense” have been by and large the major guiding

⁵⁴ Y.V. Bromley, “K voprosu o neodnoznachnosti istoricheskikh traditsii etnograficheskoi nauki” [On the question about the ambiguity of the historical traditions of ethnographic science], *Sovetskaiia etnografiia* 4 (1988): 13.

⁵⁵ A.J. Elez, *Kritika etnologii* [Critique of ethnology] (Moscow: MAIK Nauka/Interperiodika, 2001).

principles that students have long digested at ethnography/ethnology departments. Harsh as this might sound, it is essentially true. This is *not* to say that Soviet/Russian ethnography was devoid of methods or that scholars never came to learn them; this is to say that learning and employing methods was left largely up to the individual. Depending on their particular projects or tasks, individual scholars might choose to learn and use statistical, demographic, and other methods borrowed from sociology, demography, or other fields. Ethnography by itself did not and still does not offer much in that regard.

I like to quote a passage from nineteenth-century Russian ethnographer Nikolai Blinov, who wrote in his memoirs: "I had to get familiar with statistics techniques by looking into randomly available writings of researchers who published in the *Proceedings of the Geographical Society* [...]. As for the method of obtaining data and information from the peasants, I had to make up one of my own. I made a notebook, in which I listed all [people to be interviewed] and charted lines at the margin for marking such things as family status, cattle owned, crops, and so on. During a trip to a village, you have plenty of time to talk with a peasant and ask him all about his life. Once you are back, you promptly fill the figures in the notebook—the memory holds for an hour."⁵⁶ This passage is strikingly reminiscent of how Soviet students learned, and how Russian students nowadays often still continue to learn, ethnographic methods. Moving from Blinov's time to the mid-1920s, we find Shternberg remarking disapprovingly that "one has to state that ethnographic work is conducted here [...] by people who are little trained. It still has not been realized that the knowledge of language of the people studied is necessary for an ethnographer [...]. Instead, they content themselves here with brief summer excursions and quick visits [...] and data are still not dealt with scientifically."⁵⁷ And continuing on to the 1990s, we hear Sergei Sokolovski almost reiterate that, methodologically, we still get "cursory trips out and feverish data collecting, and [...] the knowledge of the studied people's language is not required anymore"; or Alexei Nikishenkov (current chair of Moscow State University's Ethnology Department) concur about methodologically weak "ethnographic excursions [where] a dozen inexperienced students would go out and have to perform, during some three or

⁵⁶ N.N. Blinov, "Dan' svoemu vremeni" [Tribute to our time], *Ural* 2 (1981): 177.

⁵⁷ L.Y. Shternberg, "Sovremennaia etnologia: noveishiie uspekhi, nauchnye tehnicii i metody" [Contemporary ethnology. Most recent success, scientific trends, and methods], *Etnografiia* 1–2 (1926): 43.

four weeks, the ritual duties of questioning the village elders. That's the way it used to be, and that's the way it is."⁵⁸

To sum up, the research pattern and academic paradigm that ethnography has *de facto* most successfully established for itself in Russia, for better or worse, has been that of a loosely structured humanities discipline that best subsisted, at different times and in different periods, on alliances with border humanities fields, claims to separate social scientific domains, and verbal rhetoric of being *nauka* presumed as generic "science." As a matter of fact, few ethnographers ever took the trouble, except in very general proclamations, to elaborate on that presumption, and it has never been clearly articulated *what* the claim to "science" actually meant for ethnography beyond the generic task of providing us with "systematized knowledge." Obviously, not everything that is systematized is science, or else everything is, because human knowledge by itself *is* the process of systematizing the fundamentally unsystematic experience. Any type of everyday knowledge is systematic and classificatory.

The vagueness of definitions aside, ethnography has never been able in practice to sustain its formal "scientific" posture with durable and verifiable theories that would have the reliable experimental and prognostic dimension required of science. Of course, it would not have maintained that scientifically pretentious image (for it is indeed a discipline that deals with data arrays that just have too many experimentally irreducible variables to be scientifically accounted for), were it perhaps not for the immense pressure on the humanities we are facing today globally and the need to prove its relevance in the face of the fierce and rather unscrupulous financial and intellectual competition.

But it is, as it has always been, a positive descriptive, interpretive, and classificatory discipline that helps us learn things about the world that we do not know sufficiently or even satisfactorily. How much has it actually helped is another question, perhaps one best discussed by those outside ethnography. Asking ethnographers about how much ethnography has helped them or others is probably a rather pointless whiggish exercise.

Concerning current trends, however, one cannot help observing that *etnografiia*, or *etnologiiia*, in Russia appears to be in some demand and is thought of as relevant mostly in the realm where it effectively becomes a

⁵⁸ S.V. Sokolovski, "Etnograficheskie issledovaniia: ideal i deistvitel'nost'" [Ethnographic research. Ideal and reality], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 2 (1993): 8. For Nikishenkov's interview, see Alexei Elfimov, "The State of the Discipline in Russia: Interviews with Russian Anthropologists," *American Anthropologist* 99 (1997): 780.

part of political science and tackles issues at the juncture of the ethnic, national, and political. The demand on what might be considered “traditional” ethnographic knowledge is gradually diminishing. So, perhaps once again, there is a surge in political and institutional currents that may make ethnography look to its never-fully-appropriated social-science assets as its ticket of choice to reserve a space within the *plus-ça-change-plus-c’est-la-même-chose* world that is called *nauka*.

We shall see.

Beyond, against, and with Ethnography: Physical Anthropology as a Science of Russian Modernity

Marina Mogilner

In sharp contrast to half-forgotten Russian physical anthropology, Russian ethnography has always been a legitimate subject of historical research. In some sense, the focus on ethnography and its cultural categories (such as *narodnost'*) prevented historians of imperial Russia from noticing and problematizing the influence of the language of race on ethnographic thinking and the politics of knowledge in the empire. According to current widely accepted historiographic wisdom:

Not only did the racial paradigm fail to take hold in a substantial way in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Russia, the importance of ethnicity was reinforced by the adoption of *narodnost'* as a marker of ethnicity. Deeply rooted in the world view of romantic idealism, *narodnost'* provided a model of ethnicity that was both essentialist—derived from a concept of immutable identity—and at the same time cultural rather than biological in its manifestations. This is, perhaps, one reason why the racial obsessions of Western Europe throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century evoked (with a few significant exceptions) only a limited response in Russia.¹

This conclusion was contested recently by new scholarship reconstructing various political and academic contexts of racial thinking in the Russian Empire.² Against this trend, the reading of Russian ethnography as an

¹ Nathaniel Knight, "Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Masses: *Narodnost'* and Modernity in Imperial Russia," in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, eds. David L. Hoffman and Yanni Katsonis (New York: Macmillan, 2000), 57–58.

² For discussions, see E. Weitz, "Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purges"; F. Hirsch, "Race without the Practice of Racial Politics"; A. Weiner, "Nothing but Certainty"; A. Lemon, "Without a 'Concept'? Race as Discursive Practice"; E. Weitz, "On Certainties and Ambivalences: Reply to My Critics," *Slavic*

almost singular dominant language of human diversity in an empire that was immune to European “racial obsessions” seems to be driven by a *Sonderweg* perception of Russian history. In what follows, I attempt to challenge this perception by presenting a version of the story as the dynamic coexistence and interaction of racial-biological and cultural models of groupness (exemplified by anthropology and ethnography, respectively) in late imperial Russia.

In the nineteenth century, *narodnost*’ definitely was not the main concept of Russian human sciences. It coexisted and, in a way, competed for academic prominence with such categories as *tribe* (*plemia*), *race*, and a more politicized category, *people* (*narod*).³ In the Russian dictionaries of the 1860s, *race* was used as a synonym for *plemia*,⁴ as both were conceptualized through a limited number of external biological indicators such as the color of skin, hair, and eyes, body height, and so on. Thus understood, *race* became an integral part of popular as well as academic ethnographic discourses. In the early twentieth century, more and more ethnographers tended to begin their studies with formal racial classifications and brief overviews of “physical types.” Multiple examples illustrate this emerging

Review 61, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 1–65; Eli Weinerman, “Racism, Racial Prejudice and Jews in Late Imperial Russia,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17, no. 3 (1994): 442–495; Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Eugene M. Avrutin, “Racial Categories and the Politics of (Jewish) Difference in Late Imperial Russia,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 8, no. 1 (2007); Marina Mogilner, *Homo Imperii: A History of Physical Anthropology in Russia* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); Svetlana Gorshenina and Sergey Abashin, eds., *Turkestan russe: une colonie pas comme les autres?* (Paris: Collection de l’IFEAC, 2008). Especially important examples of this new trend, which both establishes the presence of racial thinking in Russian scholarly discourses in a variety of disciplines, from history to Oriental studies, and from philosophy to political theory, and at the same time shows that the meaning of “race” was shifting and contextual, are Karl Hall, “‘Rasovye priznaki koreniatsia glubzhe v prirode chelovecheskogo organizma’: neulovimoe poniatie rasy v Rossiiskoi imperii,” in *Poniatia o Rossii. K istoricheskoi semantike imperskogo perioda*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012), 194–258; Vera Tolz, “Diskursy o rase: imperskaia Rossia i ‘Zapad’ v sravnenii,” in *ibid.*, 145–193. Moreover, Tolz convincingly argues that Russia was not unique in such an incoherent and pluralistic application of “race” but rather followed the general European pattern.

³ A sophisticated analysis of this coexistence is offered in Karl Hall, “‘Rasovye priznaki koreniatsia glubzhe v prirode chelovecheskogo organizma.’”

⁴ *Nastol’nyi slovar’ dlia spravok po vsem otrasliam znaniia*, vol. 3 (St. Petersburg: F. Toll’, 1864), 269; *Russkii entsiklopedicheskii slovar’*, vol. 1, part 4 (St. Petersburg: I. Mordukhovskii, 1875), 90. For more, see Avrutin, “Racial Categories and the Politics of (Jewish) Difference,” 21.

fashion toward an ethnographic adaptation of “race.” One example is the 1906 survey *Aliens in Russia (Inorodtsy v Rossii)* by the ethnographer of Omsk and Orenburg Kyrghyz, and administrator of *inorodtsy* schools in Western Siberia, Alexander Alektorov. From the outset, he divided the whole Russian population into two “human races”—Caucasians (including Russians, Poles, and “Slav migrants” such as Bulgarians and Serbs; non-Slavic “tribes” such as Lithuanians, Moldavians, “Peoples of the Caucasus,” and “migrants” to Russia such as Germans, Swedes, Greeks, and Jews) and Mongoloids (“Turkish-Tatar tribes,” “Finnish tribes,” “Mongolo-Manchuria tribes,” and “Polar tribes”). His very general and inclusive racial grouping encompassed tribes and ethnicities whose designations were culturally determined. In addition, these ethnicities were classified on a purely ideological basis as natives and foreigners (migrants). In his subsequent work, Alektorov never again referred to the Caucasian and Mongoloid racial families; his invocation of race in the introduction signaled his scientific status as a modern expert capable of systematizing his local data and going beyond narrative accounts.⁵

Parallel to this formal usage of *race* as a taxonomic category, which helped to account for differences but did not obstruct the building of cultural rather than biological boundaries or hierarchies (as in Alektorov’s case) between human collectives, another usage of *race* was taking shape. By the end of the nineteenth century, the articles on race in Russian encyclopedias were being composed by leading representatives of physical anthropology, who were not satisfied with a general descriptive taxonomy embodied in the *race-tribe* pairing or with artificial adjustments of race classifications to the purposes of ethnographic analysis. Instead they advanced a much more specialized definition of race as the basic category of the natural history of humanity. As such, the study of race required strictly scientific and universal methods and was incompatible with a subjectivizing cultural approach. As the first Russian anthropology professor, Dmitrii Anuchin (1843–1923), explained on the pages of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* of F.A. Brokgauz and I.E. Efron, only with the appearance of new scientific classifications based on a systemic approach to anthropological indicators (i.e., not on a fixation with observing a few descriptive visual traits) would it become possible to make sense of human diversity. For a broad Russian public, Anuchin spelled out a few basics of modern race science: that “racial traits do not coincide with tribal and national traits”;

⁵ A.E. Alektorov, *Inorodtsy v Rossii. Sovremennye voprosy. Finliandtsy, Poliaki, Latyshy, Evrei, Nemtsy, Armiane, Tatory* (St. Petersburg: Tipografia I.V. Leont’eva, 1906), 1–2.

that races should be distinguished from historically and culturally formed communities; and that only a monogenic theory of origin of races had scientific validity.⁶

Ethnography in the Russian imperial situation (which continued using a range of categories, from *race-tribe* to *narodnost*) had the potential to become simultaneously a science of the nationalizing imperial state, a language of non-Russian nationalisms, and a cause of the all-imperial anti-statist Populist intelligentsia seeking “just” social models—and was indeed developing in all three directions. However, the science of race ended up being appropriated by technocratic professional liberal intellectuals. They were conscious imperial modernizers whose identity required a strong demarcation from the “archaic” and “descriptive” ethnographic paradigm. Their collective identity was stronger than that of ethnographers, and their social, professional, and political outlook was less diverse. It was physical anthropology that claimed a higher academic status and objectivity of method as well as the right to absorb usable elements from other, less modern, disciplines. Darwinian evolutionism had initially provided an epistemological basis for these aspirations of the new science.⁷

A Radical Rupture

In October 1863, a group of Moscow University professors who were members of the Moscow Society of the Investigators of Nature (*Obshchestvo ispytatelei prirody*, 1805) accused their colleagues of academic conservatism and left the society to found a new one, the Imperial Society of Lovers of Natural Sciences, Anthropology, and Ethnography⁸ (*Imperatorskoe obshchestvo liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii*, IOLEAE). The IOLEAE became a home for new disciplines lacking full-scale academic recognition and embracing evolutionist epis-

⁶ D. Anuchin, “Rasy,” in *Entsyklopedicheskii slovar’ F. A. Brokgauz i I. E. Efron*, vol. 26, half-vol. 51 (St. Petersburg, 1899), 356–360.

⁷ This conclusion is explained and illustrated in my book: Mogilner, *Homo Imperii*.

⁸ This is sometimes translated in the scholarly literature as the Society of Aficionados of the Natural Sciences, Anthropology, and Ethnography. See, for example, Sergei Kan, *Lev Shternberg, Anthropologist, Russian Socialist, Jewish Activist* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 52. An alternative translation is “The Society of Friends of...”; see Nathaniel Knight, “Nikolai Kharuzin and the Quest for a Universal Human Science: Anthropological Evolutionism and the Russian Ethnographic Tradition, 1885–1900,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 1 (2008): 88.

temology. As Nathaniel Knight noted in this regard, the choice of the slightly archaic term “lover” (*liubitel*), signifying both admirer and dilettante, was not accidental. It hinted at a non-elite, democratic spirit of a new model of scholarship that was to encompass ethnography and physical anthropology.⁹ Yet this democratic symbiosis of a number of disciplines on the evolutionary platform enthralled natural scientists first and foremost. Along with the author of the idea of the IOLEAE, Moscow University zoology professor A.P. Bogdanov (1834–1896), they saw in physical anthropology the logical culmination of evolutionism’s expansion into the sphere of knowledge about the natural world (including humans).¹⁰ Bogdanov pigeonholed ethnography in a humanistic paradigm. As such, it satisfied enlightened curiosity¹¹ but was scientifically inferior to anthropology—the science that logically evolved in the course of progressive “historical development of our knowledge.” Hence, anthropology’s scientific foundations and its connection to modernity were regarded as much more solid.¹² This science required professional training even from the “lovers.” Characteristically, the first elected IOLEAE chair was the Moscow University geology professor and evolutionist G.E. Shchurovskii (1803–1884), and his first presentation in the society considered the importance of human fossils for understanding the path of evolution.

With the foundation in 1900 of the *Russian Anthropological Journal* (*Russkii antropologicheskii zhurnal*, *RAJ*), members of the Anthropological Division of the IOLEAE acquired a highly effective instrument for publicizing their discipline’s “foundation myth.” They denied Russian anthropology any pre-Moscow past that would connect it to the “headquarters” of Russian ethnography—the St. Petersburg Imperial Russian Geographical Society (IRGO).¹³ Only once did Anuchin allow himself to credit the Ethnographic Division of the Russian Geographical Society of St. Petersburg for “occasionally collecting physical anthropology

⁹ Nathaniel Knight, “Panslavism. Imperiia napokaz: Vserosiiskaia etnograficheskaia vystavka 1867 goda,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 51 (2001): 111–131.

¹⁰ Alexander Vucinich, *Darwin in Russian Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 68.

¹¹ A.P. Bogdanov, “Antropologiiia i Etnografiia,” *Naturalist* 20–21 (1866): 309–314.

¹² A.P. Bogdanov, “Otchet po ustroistvu Antropologicheskoi vystavki za 1887 g.,” *Izvestiia IOLEAE* 37, no. 1: 66.

¹³ D. Anuchin, “Na rubezhe polutora- i polustoletiia,” *RAJ* 37–38, no. 1–2 (1916): 9; D. Anuchin, “Beglyi vzgliad na proshloe antropologii i na ee zadachi v Rossii,” *RAJ* 1 (1900): 34–35.

data.”¹⁴ In general, however, this scholar, who enjoyed recognition beyond anthropology as a geographer, zoologist, and ethnographer, claimed that ethnography had never studied “the physical characteristics of [human] tribes.”¹⁵ Presiding for many years over the IOLEAE, Anuchin, more than anyone else, helped spread the perception that physical anthropology could not emerge within a discipline that did not embrace Darwinian evolutionism. Moscow anthropologists insisted that their science was replanted into Russian (Moscow) soil directly from Europe, suggesting that the IOLEAE was a Russian analog of the French Anthropological Society (founded in 1860).¹⁶ Having been, as it were, a foreign import, physical anthropology instilled evolutionism into Russian ethnography, and due to this influence, ethnographers-evolutionists became legitimate partners in the network of modern human sciences.¹⁷

Certainly, not all ethnographers-evolutionists were ready to accept this myth. They read Charles Darwin, August Comte, Edward Tylor, Lewis Henry Morgan, James Frazer, or Friedrich Engels independently of Russian physical anthropologists and often developed their social-cultural evolutionism without knowing or taking into account works of the latter. Some of them remained rather skeptical of race science. One of the best-known evolutionists in Russian ethnography, Lev Iakovlevich Shternberg (1861–1927), who was recently re-established as a Russian inventor of field research and the proto-participant observation method,¹⁸ worked in the St. Petersburg Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography and, in addition to being an active IRGO ethnographer, participated in the activities of the Russian Anthropological Society of St. Petersburg University. He even called upon Jewish intellectuals to engage in a broad race investigation of Russian Jewry.¹⁹ And yet Shternberg never published in *RAJ*, never collected anthropometric data, and definitely preferred race science

¹⁴ Anuchin specifically mentioned works by I. Mainov and A. Shchapov and studies in prehistorical archaeology by I. Poliakov and K. Merezhkovskii: Anuchin, “Beglyi vzgliad na proshloe antropologii,” 36.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ A. Ivanovskii, “Ob antropologicheskome izuchenii inorodcheskogo naseleniia Rossii,” *RAJ* 9, no. 1 (1902): 113.

¹⁷ Vucinich, *Darwin in Russian Thought*, 69.

¹⁸ Kan, Lev Shternberg, 109.

¹⁹ Marina Mogilner, “Biographical Patterns of Jewish Physical Anthropology in the Russian Empire,” paper presented at the AAASS National Convention, Boston, MA, November 12–15, 2009; Marina Mogilner, “Toward a History of Russian-Jewish Medical Materialism: Russian-Jewish Physicians and the Politics of Jewish Biological Normalization,” *Jewish Social Studies* 19, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 70–106.

that relativized the endurance of race indicators and exposed their environmental conditioning.²⁰ He always remained a cultural anthropologist, and he embraced the language of race mostly to fight racial anti-Semitism. His radical and persistent evolutionism meant equal developmental opportunities for representatives of different cultures (not races), a consistent belief in human progress, and an ideological preference for world-scale rather than nation-scale developmental models. Other ethnographers-evolutionists might have stressed the concept of “survival” (of archaic customs and norms that had lost their original meaning in modern culture), the idea of the psychological unity of mankind, or the comparative method of study, but all of them found in “evolutionism” a way out of ethnographic particularism. Like Shternberg, they often paid lip service to physical anthropology as a highly specialized and systematic modern science (especially in its liberal non-racist version) but used its methods only in an abridged format customized by scientific ethnographic discourse, which required description of the basic visual traits of a “type.”²¹ Self-identified evolutionists in ethnography rejected physical anthropology’s aspiration to function as an umbrella science for their disciplinary field. Race scientists, however, were convinced that anthropology represented the most modern and universal umbrella offered to human sciences.

Obviously, Russian race scientists were far from unique in their ambitions. They followed the general European pattern of downplaying the relevance of such disciplines as philology (which, in the words of the French anthropologist Paul Broca, was constructing language families within the uncertain “sphere of probability [...]”²²), or ethnography, which studied subjectively identified cultural differences and operated within the old humanistic paradigm.²³ When physical anthropologists talked about a

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ As an example of such an approach, see a popular textbook translated from German under Shternberg’s editorship for Brokgauz and Efron’s “Library for Self-Education”: Ia. Sokolovskii, *Chelovekovedenie. Osnovy antropologii i etnografii*, ed. of trans. L. Ia. Shternberg (St. Petersburg: Brokgauz and Efron, 1904).

²² Quotation is from Lev Poliakov, *Ariiskii Mif. Issledovanie istokov razizma* (St. Petersburg: Evrasia, 1996), 275.

²³ Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 50–51; Leon Poliakov, *The Arian Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Joy Harvey, “Evolutionism Transformed: Positivists and Materialists in the Société d’Anthropologie de Paris from Second Empire to Third Republic,” in *The Wider Domain of Evolutionary Thought*, eds. D. Oldroyd and J. Langham (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1983), 289–310; Michael Hammond, “Anthropology as a

racial redescription of the Russian Empire, they envisioned a network of specialists working in all corners of the empire according to a standard program and using standard instruments. They were producing universal data that were not only verifiable but also automatically suitable for European racial cartography (putting Russia on European racial maps was a modernizing act by definition). By contrast, the narrative language of ethnography required literal and cultural translations and thus was not compatible as a modernization medium. It is indicative that anthropologists compared their science not to ethnography, philology, or folklore studies, but to new, applied disciplines that required specialized training (such as statistics, meteorology, and soil studies). As Dmitrii Anuchin wrote in 1902: "We should, so to speak, undertake an anthropological survey of Russia [*antropologicheskuiu s' 'emku Rossii*]."²⁴ In some sense, this is similar to the way topographic, geological, statistical, or soil surveys are done. It would be even more correct to compare our survey to the work of the network of meteorological stations that collect observations of climate elements, and then, taking these data together, provide information about the climate of the whole country."²⁵ On the other hand, the same Professor Anuchin studied ethnography and the *narodovedenie*. His example is the best illustration of how difficult it was, on a practical level, to radically contrast "cultural" ethnography with "scientific" anthropology, as both were poorly institutionalized and often concentrated in the same academic societies, museums, and university departments.

Becoming a "Normal" Science

Ethnographic knowledge may have been present in the actual content of university teaching from the late eighteenth century, but not before anthropologists had mobilized for the course of academic "normalization" of their science did ethnography have a chance to officially penetrate the

Weapon of Social Combat in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 16 (1980): 118–132, etc.

²⁴ This term—*s' 'emka* (borrowed from topography, and meaning the modeling of landscape on paper in minute detail through scientific methods and tools)—became a common rhetorical device in the anthropological literature. See, for example, the Kazan anthropologist M.M. Khomiakov appealing to his colleagues to undertake a systemic "craniological surveying" of the Volga-Kama region. M.M. Khomiakov, "Antropologia v Kazani za 43 goda," *Trudy obshchestva estestvoispytatelei pri IKU* 46, no. 6 (1915): 28.

²⁵ Dmitrii Anuchin, "O zadachakh i metodakh antropologii," *RAJ* 9, no. 1 (1902): 72.

curriculum of the imperial universities. In 1872 the IOLEAE secured a private donation from the industrialist K.O. von Mekh specifically intended to support the first Russian university chair of physical anthropology. The society offered this money to the Imperial Moscow University and lobbied for a gradual transformation of the chair with a specially trained docent into a chair with a full professor.²⁶

Russian universities had no precedents for special anthropology or ethnography chairs. In practice, most of the professors interested in ethnography were affiliated with history and philology departments.²⁷ The plan of the IOLEAE initiative group to launch its anthropology chair in the Natural Sciences Division of the Department of Physics and Mathematics should be appreciated against this background. Similarly, a future candidate for the position of docent in anthropology was to be chosen only from the ranks of natural scientists. The IOLEAE letter insisted that this candidate, like most other university doctoral candidates, would spend some time in foreign universities, laboratories, and museums. Alongside anthropological methods, there he would study “tribes that inhabited Russia.” In other words, this letter proceeded from the assumption that the future university anthropologist equally lacked both types of training and both types of expertise—in universally applicable race science and in local Russian ethnography, and the latter was to be learned not in Russia, but in Germany and France, as a minor supplement to basic anthropological knowledge.²⁸ In the midst of the battles for mandatory status for anthropology in the university curriculum, the IOLEAE founding member and Moscow University zoology professor, A.P. Bogdanov, tried to convince his colleagues that anthropology should round out the educational program in natural sciences. He believed that in order to grasp the course, the students needed to complete their training in zoology, mineralogy, and geology. Ethnography was not mentioned in his programmatic speeches even as a desirable option: “Thus the study and evaluation of the systemic anatomical traits of different tribes require a knowledge of zoology and anatomy; the concept of early man can be understood only by those who know geology, while puzzles of the everyday existence of people of the Stone and Bronze ages are often resolved with the help of mineralogical

²⁶ Moscow Central Historical Archive (TsIAM), F. 428. Op. 46. D. 339. L. 2 ob.

²⁷ Moscow University accepted the money for the new chair but declined any responsibility for financially supporting its staff, collections, and affiliated museums and was reluctant to make anthropological courses mandatory. TsIAM, F. 428. Op. 46. D. 339. L. 27–27 rev.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

data.”²⁹ Bogdanov’s actual teaching plan allowed ethnography in the form of “systemic” analysis of “tribes, primarily Russian tribes.”³⁰ As the first candidate for the anthropology chair, Anuchin was perfectly prepared to implement such a vision of anthropology and ethnography as university subjects.³¹ He had obtained initial training in zoology, participated in the work of the IOLEAE, and, as a future anthropology docent, spent the academic years of 1876–1879 in France at the *Ecole d’Anthropologie* and in German universities and museums. While his French training with Paul Broca focused on highly specialized anthropometry and craniology, his German intellectual experience in Berlin, Munich, Dresden, and Leipzig was more diverse, encompassing some ethnography and archaeology.³² Because Russian universities did not grant degrees in race science (or in ethnography), Anuchin’s 1881 dissertation (“On Some Anomalies of the Human Skull, in Particular on Their Distribution Between Races”) earned him a masters degree in zoology³³ and a promised position as docent.³⁴

Three years later, in 1884, a new university statute was passed by the Ministry of Education. This document did not offer legal provisions for the chairs of anthropology. Instead it reflected the views and interests of Petersburg academicians who lobbied for the introduction of new chairs of geography and ethnography in departments of history and philology. This was in fact an ideal arrangement for many Russian ethnographers. At the Twelfth Congress of Russian Natural Scientists and Physicians (Moscow, 1909), at a special subsection of the Section of Geography, Ethnography, and Physical Anthropology, Lev Shternberg again returned to this short-lived reform, proposing the introduction of ethnography chairs in histori-

²⁹ Note by A. Bogdanov, in TsIAM, F. 418. Op. 48. D. 422. L. 3–3 rev.

³⁰ Ibid., 4.

³¹ Anuchin’s 1879–1880 course became the first Russian university course in physical anthropology.

³² V.V. Bogdanov, *Dmitrii Nikolaevich Anuchin. Antropolog i geograf* (Moscow: Obshchestvo ispytatelei prirody, 1940), x–xi. In terms of institutionalization of physical anthropology, Germany was not very different from Russia. The first German chair in anthropology was set up in 1879 in Munich, where Johannes Ranke assumed professorship. In Berlin a similar university chair was created only in 1900. Felix von Luschan, who assumed a professorship there, became full professor (*ordinarius*) in 1909: Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, 54.

³³ The defense took place on January 24, 1881. TsIAM, F. 418. Op. 50. D. 22. L. 3, 4. The text of the dissertation by Dmitrii Anuchin: “On Some Anomalies of the Human Skull and Mostly on Their Distribution Between Races,” *Izvestiia IOLEAE* 38, no. 3 [Proceedings of the Anthropological Division, vol. 6] (1880).

³⁴ TsIAM, F. 418. Op. 50. D. 141. L. 3–4.

cal-philological departments of Russian universities.³⁵ It seems that in comparison with anthropologists, ethnographers as a community were lacking unity, a drive toward mobilization, and organizational skills. When in 1884 the emergence of a legal institutional framework for the academic normalization of ethnography as a part of humanities education caused the denormalization of anthropology as a natural science, the self-organizing anthropological network of scholars and amateurs reacted immediately. In 1885 Kazan University suggested transferring the new chairs of ethnography and geography to the departments of mathematics and physics. In 1886 this initiative was supported by a special commission of professors of St. Petersburg University. This commission also suggested that a model ethnography-geography chair should have two professors—one for anthropology and ethnography, and another for geography, as this discipline was supposedly “unrelated” to the first two. In 1888 this plan was formally implemented: the chairs of ethnography and geography were officially moved to the departments of mathematics and physics. In reality, however, Russian universities did not have enough professors trained to teach physical anthropology or ethnography, not to mention both disciplines together. The actual specialization of a professor and the balance between ethnography, anthropology, and geography varied from one university to another.³⁶ For example, Anuchin became a professor of geography at the chair of ethnography and geography in the Department of Mathematics and Physics. In 1891 he was elected doctor of geography *honoris causa* and a full professor. In this capacity he offered courses in physical anthropology, the anthropology and geography of Russia, physical geography, general ethnology, Russian ethnography, prehistoric archaeology, and *Landeskunde* (*zemlevedenie*). He tried to turn ethnography into a modern research field and university subject, defining its rationale much more broadly than just collecting and writing descriptive accounts. He saw the real task of ethnography in the systematization and scientific interpretation of its data. To achieve this ideal, ethnographers had to borrow the methods of anthropological analysis—that is, to critically reflect on their language, learn comparative methodologies, focus on the

³⁵ Vasilii Bartol'd, “XII s'ezd russkikh estestvoispytatelei i vrachei v Moskve,” *Zhivaia starina* 21, no. 1–2 (1910): 179.

³⁶ F. Volkov, “Antropologiya i ee universitetskoe prepodavanie (K peresmotru universitetskogo ustava),” in *Ezhgodnik Russkogo Antropologicheskogo Obshchestva pri Imperatorskom Petrogradskom universitete*, ed. S.I. Rudenko (Petrograd: RAO, 1915): 99–107; “K voprosu o prepodavanii antropologii v Kazanskom universitete,” *Zhurnal Kazanskogo Mediko-Antropologicheskogo Obshchestva* 1 (1921): 272.

geographic distribution of various tribes and ethnic groups, and study the evolutionary development of specific institutions. Without using these terms, Anuchin was suggesting for ethnography a combination of evolutionism with diffusionism (which at the time had few adherents among Russian ethnographers), and he framed it as a natural science.³⁷ His students at Moscow University were also natural scientists specializing in physical anthropology. They were taught to differentiate between cultural phenomena such as ethnicity and biological phenomena such as race, and they learned special methods to study the latter. In another, more technically and professionally oriented institute of higher education—the higher geographical courses of the Ministry of Land Cultivation, opened in Petrograd in 1916—the same arrangement of disciplines meant specialization not in ethnography or anthropology, but in geography.³⁸ Even in the 1910s, the field of knowledge about human collectives and their environments was rather fluid and allowed different disciplinary and methodological arrangements.

The Moscow Liberal Anthropology

In the setting of the Moscow IOLEAE, anthropology played the leading role. While the society's Ethnographic Division was strong academically, it did not act as the intellectual leader in the field. The status of two disciplines in Moscow was embodied by none other than Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin, who by the late nineteenth century already functioned in public opinion as a universal symbol of all Russian—Pushkin personified Russia's mysterious soul and its Westernism, its liberal spirit, its respect for antiquity, and so forth.³⁹ In 1899, when Russia celebrated the centenary of the birth of its greatest poet, the head of the IOLEAE Ethnographic Division and prominent folklorist Vsevolod Fedorovich Miller (1848–1913)

³⁷ D.N. Anuchin, "O zadachakh russkoi etnografii," *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1 (1889): 1–35. In light of this analysis and the broader context of Anuchin's anthropological works, I would dispute Knight's characterization of Anuchin as someone who "stayed within the traditional framework of Russian ethnography" and framed it as "*narodovedenie*, the study of peoples." Knight, "Nikolai Kharuzin," 97.

³⁸ R.L. Zolotnitskaia, "K istorii osnovaniia geograficheskikh institutov v Petrograde. Ikh rol' v razvitiu otechestvennoi geografii," *Izvestiia Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva* 130, no. 6 (1998): 22–38.

³⁹ Marcus Levitt, *Russian Literary Politics and the Pushkin Celebration of 1880* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

proclaimed Pushkin a great Russian ethnographer. Regardless of his French education and aristocratic upbringing, said Miller, Pushkin “tried to grasp the spirit of the Russian language, learned people’s talk, songs, fairy tales, traditions, and so on; he collected examples of popular poetry and in the end reached a deep understanding of the spirit of the Russian people.”⁴⁰ Pushkin as an ethnographer-genius simultaneously raised the status of the discipline and relativized its scientific merit, as ethnography presumably did not require any special training—the desire to collect cultural artifacts and understand the language and the people’s spirit sufficed.

Two leading IOLEAE anthropologists, Anuchin and D.N. Ivanovskii, also participated in the anniversary festivities. On May 26, 1899, they laid a wreath at Pushkin’s monument. The ribbon on the wreath read: “To the great Russian poet-*ethnographer*—from the IOLEAE.”⁴¹ Anuchin thus chose not to invite Pushkin to join the anthropological community. On the contrary, he turned him into an object of anthropological analysis. In 1899 the liberal Moscow daily *Russkie vedomosti*, where Anuchin worked as a columnist and one of the editors, featured a series of his lengthy articles (twelve altogether, published between April 10 and July 31, 1899) on Pushkin’s racial background.⁴² This detailed and unusual work of scholarship held that Pushkin exemplified specific tendencies of racial development that contributed to the formation of this perfect physical instrument for expressing Russian national genius. Pushkin, as a “mixed racial type,” was a convenient object of anthropological analysis. At the same time, he lacked modern specialized training to be seen as a subject of this analysis. Anthropology claimed the right to interpret Russian reality in all its manifestations, even in such brilliant ones as “Pushkin.”

The members of the Moscow IOLEAE Anthropological Division were well aware of their high scientific status. The division was a real intellectual center of Russian imperial anthropology, connected with

⁴⁰ “Publichnoe zasedanie Antropologicheskogo i Etnograficheskogo otdelov, 25 maia 1899 g., posviashchennoe pamiati A.S. Pushkina,” *Izvestiia IOLEAE* 95 [Trudy Antropologicheskogo otdela, vol. 19]: 255.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 256 (emphasis added).

⁴² D. Anuchin, “Pushkin (antropologicheskii eskiz),” *Russkie vedomosti* 99, April 10, 1899: 3; no. 106, April 17, 1899: 2–3; no. 114, April 27, 1899: 2–3; no. 120, May 3, 1899: 2–3; no. 127, May 10, 1899: 2–3; no. 134, May 17, 1899: 2–3; no. 143, May 26, 1899: 4–5; no. 163, June 15, 1899: 2–3; no. 172, June 24, 1899: 2–3; no. 180, July 2, 1899: 2–3; no. 193, July 15, 1899: 2–3; no. 209, July 31, 1899: 2–3. A separate edition of *Pushkin* became a bibliographic rarity: D.N. Anuchin, *Pushkin (antropologicheskii eskiz)* (Moscow: Russkie vedomosti, 1899).

other anthropological academic societies and individual professionals involved in anthropological research in different regions of the empire. Moscow-oriented anthropologists developed an extremely influential liberal version of the *anthropology of imperial diversity*. It clearly differentiated between race and nation, and, in general, between “race” and “culture.” Terminologically, liberal anthropologists of the Moscow school preferred a less totalizing and rather unexcited “physical type” to “race.” They studied both “Russian” (in an ethnic/national sense) and non-Russian “physical types” in the empire. The technical language of their anthropological analysis neutralized nationalizing tendencies of individual research projects, even when they were present in the initial research design. The school pursued a utopian project—the total anthropological description of the entire population of the Russian Empire, establishing not hierarchies but “degrees of kinship” and types of interaction. The existing imperial borders functioned as the natural limits of a yet to be “anthropologically rationalized” Russian Empire re-created as a modern state. Moscow liberal anthropology was thus a science of modern imperialism, which, curiously enough, rejected colonialism and experimented with integrationist scientific and (by extension) political and social models. When anthropologists of this school studied Russians, they presented them as many regional mixed physical types. Russians were never used in their works as a self-referential analytical category. Liberal anthropologists as a rule studied not particular people (race–nation) or ethnicities, but a given territory (mostly on a district [*uezd*] and province [*guberniia*] scale) and its physical types—all without exception. In this academic network, a Georgian anthropologist “measured” all population groups within his reach, including “ethnic Russians,” while Russians, Poles, and Ukrainians did the same in their localities. Their mantra was “mixed physical type”—the most common result of empirical anthropometric measurements carried out according to the Moscow research program and instructions. This “mixed physical type,” plausible from a purely scientific point of view, presented a highly problematic political concept that had no equivalent in the current political and social practices of the empire. While Moscow anthropologists took empire seriously as a supranational polity capable of progressive self-improvement, the actual vector of the Russian Empire’s modernization definitely led to the marginalization and stigmatization of mixed and complex identities and loyalties. And yet, the status of Moscow liberal anthropology as the leading school in Russian race science

allowed it to effectively control the scientific colonial and nationalist imagination of individual scholars and amateurs.⁴³

Russian anthropologists and ethnographers both had to rely on the empire's official ethnic and confessional nomenclatures of peoples (e.g., *Velikorussy*—Great Russians, *Malorossy*—Little Russians, or *Velikorussy of a given district*—instead of collective “Russians”; or the *Orthodox* or *Muslim population* of a given region). Ethnographers as a rule did not problematize the gap (if any) between their analytical language and the language of practical population politics. Liberal anthropologists acutely felt that biological “race” or “physical type” was incompatible with “archaic” ethnic or confessional definitions. But they preferred to resolve this difficulty by stressing their awareness of the danger of this uncomfortable compromise, and avoided constructing new groupings and larger national entities for the purposes of their research.⁴⁴ In this situation, ethnographic discourse emerged as less self-reflective and—as paradoxical as this may sound vis-à-vis the biological concept of “race”—more essentialist. Ethnography essentialized the old irregular imperial diversity instead of rationalizing and rearranging it in new terms. In general, the coexistence of ethnography and anthropology in the context of the Moscow IOLEAE was unproblematic so long as its ethnographers accepted their modest status.

St. Petersburg Colonial Anthropology

The Russian Anthropological Society of St. Petersburg University (RAO, founded in 1884, but truly active after 1888) chose for itself a model of colonial anthropology and the ethos of scientific experts; it demonstrated

⁴³ For a detailed treatment of the Moscow liberal anthropology of imperial diversity, see Mogilner, *Homo Imperii*; Mogilner, “Russian Physical Anthropology of the Nineteenth–Early Twentieth Centuries: Imperial Race, Colonial Other, Degenerate Types, and the Russian Racial Body,” in *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire*, ed. Ilya Gerasimov et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 155–189.

⁴⁴ Russian military anthropologists represented an alternative case: for many years they insisted on including the category of “nationality” in official Russian military-medical statistics. Their project of modernization and rationalization of the imperial army was heavily influenced by European military (often colonial) practices and discourses. For more on Russian military anthropology as the only branch of applied anthropology recognized by the Russian state, see Mogilner, *Homo Imperii*; Mogilner, “Doing Anthropology in Russian Military Uniform,” in Reinhard Johler, Christian Marchetti, and Monique Scheer, eds., *Doing Anthropology in Wartime and War Zones: World War I and the Cultural Sciences in Europe* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2010).

loyalty to the regime and the desire to embody the official science of the modern empire, which was engaged in the colonization of less civilized territories and peoples. Although its membership and ideology evolved with time, its contempt for public opinion and proclivity toward elitist, expert-oriented discourse, as well as its focus on the anthropology of imperial minorities, remained unchanged up until the eve of the great war.⁴⁵ The state proved to be mostly uninterested in the expertise offered by St. Petersburg anthropologists and unwilling to support their initiatives to modernize imperial rule. Paradoxically, the imperial Ministry of Education eagerly funded the Moscow anthropological division's *Russian Anthropological Journal*—the major mouthpiece of liberal anthropologists, spreading their discursive influence empire-wide⁴⁶—while the St. Petersburg Russian Anthropological Society was denied even small subsidies for its publications.⁴⁷ Such preferential treatment of Moscow anthropology at the expense of the Petersburg school can be explained by uncertainty regarding the universal merit of race science for the empire. Indeed, in the official political and social discourses, “race” featured situationally and almost never as a major and single marker of difference. Still another, even more natural explanation may be the IRGO, whose ethnographers traditionally retained a high reputation and visibility in Petersburg. They were servants of the imperial state in special ways. While paying substantial attention to studies of Russian culture, they also provided information

⁴⁵ On the Russian Anthropological Society, see the Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg (TsGIA SPb), F. 14. Op. 1. D. 8591; Op. 1. Vol. 4. D. 9045; “Ustav Russkogo Antropologicheskogo Obshchestva pri S.-Peterburgskom Universitete,” in *Protokoly zasedanii RAO pri IPU za 1895/6 god*, ed. V. Ol’derogge (St. Petersburg, 1898), 3–6; L.P. Nikol’skii, “Pamiati Professora Eduarda Jul’evicha Petri,” *Trudy Antropologicheskogo Obshchestva pri Voenno-Meditsinskoi akademii*, vol. 6 (za 1899–1900 uchebnye goda) (St. Petersburg, 1900), 3–8; “Russkoe Antropologicheskoe obshchestvo pri Peterburgskom universitete,” *RAZh*, 7–8, no. 1–2 (1904): 233; I.L. Tikhonov, *Arkheologia v Sankt-Peterburgskom universitete. Istoriograficheskie ocherki* (St. Petersburg: SPbGU, 2003): Appendix and other. For an extensive treatment, see Mogilner, *Homo Imperii*.

⁴⁶ The first issue of *RAJ* came out in 1900. Its predecessor was the *Diary of the Anthropological Division* [*Dnevnik Antropologicheskogo otdela*], published from 1890 to 1893 in three volumes (twenty issues). *RAJ* appeared regularly until 1906, when a fire in the printing shop and financial problems interrupted its publication. The journal was not published from 1908 to 1911 or from 1914 to 1915. It re-emerged in 1916, was interrupted by the revolution of 1917, and resumed a regular schedule in 1924.

⁴⁷ Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), F. 733. Op. 144. D. 3, “O naznachenii posobii uchenym obshchestvam, uchrezhdeniiam i litsam,” (1904); RGIA. F. 733. Op. 145. D. 3, “O naznachenii posobii uchenym obshchestvam, uchrezhdeniiam i litsam,” Ll. 1–92; and others.

on cultures, modes of economic activities, religions, values, and the customary law, medicine, and demography of Russian *inorodtsy*. For the imperial authorities, operating within the particularistic system of governance—in which laws, social policies, degrees of religious tolerance or the application of “Russification” measures varied for different population groups—the immediate value of specified “local” ethnographic knowledge was more obvious than the universalizing pretensions of physical anthropology.

Ethnography and anthropology were formally introduced in St. Petersburg imperial university’s regular curriculum in 1887, after the establishment of the chair of geography and ethnography in the Department of Physics and Mathematics. Its first professor was Eduard Iul’evich Petri (1854–1899); in 1894 he also assumed leadership of the RAO. Petri graduated from St. Petersburg Military Medical Academy and then continued his education in Germany and Switzerland. Before accepting the offer from Petersburg University, he taught anthropology in Bern University and socialized in German, mostly Berlin, academic circles.⁴⁸ Unlike local divisions of the German Anthropological Society, the Berlin Anthropological Society, established in 1869, specialized predominantly in the anthropology and ethnography of non-European peoples, and Petri brought to Russia precisely this Berlin-type colonial anthropology. He understood it as a discipline that studied only “uncultured” peoples. The “cultured” ones were capable of producing self-descriptive narratives and thus were to be dealt with by historians and other students of culture.⁴⁹ As Petri explained in lectures to his Russian students, while regular history was bound by narrative sources, “the natural history of humanity” was capable of extracting facts from “half-rotted bones”: “these negligible remnants acquire amazing life under the magic touch of science. They compose strange pictures [...] and we recognize in them the origin of human race [...]”⁵⁰ In this passionate way, Petri reproduced one of the basic, widely popular tropes of European race science.⁵¹ During the same years, Adolf Bastian, for example, also contrasted

⁴⁸ L.P. Nikol’skii, “Pamiati professora Eduarda Yul’evicha Petri,” *Trudy Antropologicheskogo obshchestva pri Voenno-Meditsinskoi akademii*, vol. 6 (za 1899–1900 uchebnye gody) (St. Petersburg: VMA, 1900), 3–8.

⁴⁹ E. Iu. Petri, *Antropologiya* (Vol. 1: *Osnovy antropologii*) (St. Petersburg: Kartograf. zavedenie A. Il’ina, 1890), 47.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵¹ Petri developed his quite radical views in one of the first Russian anthropology textbooks: E. Iu. Petri, *Antropologiya* (Vol. 1: *Osnovy antropologii*); *Antropologiya* (Vol. 2: *Somaticheskaya antropologiya*) (St. Petersburg: Kartograf. zavedenie A. Il’ina, 1895).

anthropology (as “natural history”) with history, which interpreted self-referential phenomena such as culture and therefore was destined to rotate within the orbit of that culture’s national consciousness (*Volksbewusstsein*).⁵² The same was applicable to an unreflective and descriptive ethnography if it associated itself with history and the humanities in general. In the eyes of anthropological modernists, the legitimate objects of truly scientific ethnography were limited to early family forms and expressions of the spiritual life of “primitive” societies.⁵³

Applied to specific Russian conditions, such an approach, especially if combined with consistent evolutionism, could imply a historical focus on the “primitive” stage of development of all population groups without exception. This is how, for example, the task of anthropology and ethnography (and the message of Petri’s textbook in anthropology⁵⁴) was interpreted by Nikolai Kharuzin (1865–1900), the brother of the equally renowned physical anthropologist Aleksei Kharuzin (1864–1931).⁵⁵ Nikolai, who studied cultural ethnography in Russia and physical anthropology in Paris, construed ethnography in a systemic “progressive” fashion as a science based on evolutionist precepts. This science “studies the way of life [*byt*] of specific tribes and peoples; by doing this it strives to locate the laws that govern human development at lower stages of culture.”⁵⁶ Thus understood, ethnography had to study and systematize not peoples or ethnicities but “cultural phenomena”⁵⁷—just as anthropology in its liberal Moscow version was studying not “races” but “physical types.”

Petri’s application of the dichotomy of “cultured/uncultured” histories to the Russian imperial context had different implications. It confined anthropology to the study of the “underdeveloped” *inorodtsy* of the empire, thus framing it as a science of colonialism. Under his guidance, Petersburg anthropology demonstrated a particular interest in paleontology

⁵² Adolf Bastian, *Ethnologie und Geschichte in ihren Berührungspunkten unter Bezugnahme auf Indien* (Bd. 2. Ideale Welten in Wort und Bild) (Berlin: Emil Ferber, 1892), 21.

⁵³ N. Kharuzin, “E. Iu. Petri (Nekrolog),” *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* 4 (1899): 124–126.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁵⁵ On the brothers and the whole Kharuzin ethnographic-anthropological dynasty, see S.A. Tokarev, *Istoriia Russkoi Etnografii (Dooktiabr’skii period)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966): 424–426; M.M. Kerimova, “Nauchnoe nasledie etnografov Kharuzinykh,” part 1, *Vestnik arkhivista*, 5–6 (2005): 112–121; part 2, *Vestnik arkhivista*, 1 (2006): 109–123. On Nikolai Kharuzin, see Knight, “Nikolai Kharuzin.”

⁵⁶ N. Kharuzin, *Etnografia: Lektsii chitannye v Imperatorskom moskovskom universitete*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1901), 37.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

and archaeology,⁵⁸ on the one hand, and the anthropology and ethnography of the non-Russian population of the empire on the other. The perception of ethnicity in this paradigm was heavily racialized. At the same time, practical anthropologists were contrasted with traditional ethnographers, as experts producing the type of knowledge that was hardly accessible to unskilled and descriptive ethnographers: “[...] we categorically cannot agree with the flippant view propagated by our ethnographic literature that it is enough for an amateur to treat the collecting [of objects] with love. Unfortunately, precisely these ardent ‘lovers,’ in the literary sense of the word, inject the greatest confusion into our science by producing quite detailed works that are nevertheless devoid of any critical sense or competence.”⁵⁹ Petri’s explicitly colonial interpretation of anthropology and ethnography proved to be too radical for the Russian academic as well as political milieus. It was redefined in its essentials by his direct successor at St. Petersburg University and the RAO, Dmitrii Andreevich Koropchevskii (1842–1903),⁶⁰ known for (among other achievements) translating Edward Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* (1872) into Russian. Koropchevskii was also a natural scientist by training but had unusually broad humanitarian interests that expressed themselves through journalism, theater criticism, and even literary writings.⁶¹ In the early twentieth century, he represented a slightly outdated type—a Russian populist who idealized the *narod* and understood all academic and popular activities as a service to the simple folk. As S. A. Tokarev wrote approvingly in his history of Russian ethnography (1966), Koropchevskii’s popular books on ethnography “were saturated with a humanistic spirit of respect toward the labor and culture of the people, and they nurtured the same feelings among their readers.”⁶² It is no accident that ethnography was a favorite type of scholarship for many Russian populists, and Koropchevskii was no exception. To

⁵⁸ Petri, *Antropologiya* (vol. 1, *Osnovy antropologii*), 5. Beginning in 1888 Petri included in the general course in anthropology a number of archaeological courses: “Prehistoric Ages and Cultures of Primitive People”; “Anthropology: Prehistoric Man”; “Prehistoric Times and Methods of Prehistoric Studies”; “Anthropology and the Popular Life of Primitive People” (the titles of the courses changed from year to year). Tikhonov, *Arkheologiya v Sankt-Peterburgskom universitete*, 110.

⁵⁹ Petri, *Antropologiya* (vol. 1, *Osnovy antropologii*), 4.

⁶⁰ In the 1870s he edited such magazines as *Znanie* [Knowledge] and *Slovo* [Word], while later he published his articles in other journals and magazines.

⁶¹ D.A. Koropchevskii penned several stories (“Il’ia Stepanovich Sevriukov,” 1868; “Pravyi,” 1891; “Griadushchii,” 1887; “Shchastlivye gody,” 1890; “Beatrice,” 1891), and novels (including *Zolotoe serdtse*, 1889, and *Sviashchennyi ogon’*, 1892).

⁶² Tokarev, *Istoriia Russkoi Etnografii*, 431.

downplay striking discursive and methodological differences that divided ethnography and anthropology in the Russian context, he turned to geography as a field that promised to connect the study of race with that of culture and environment. Koropchevskii moved away from Petri's colonial anthropology toward Ratzel-inspired anthropography, which focused on the genesis of ethnicities in specific geographical regions (the title of his 1895 dissertation at St. Petersburg University was "The Significance of 'Geographical' Provinces in the Ethno-genetic Process").⁶³ Koropchevskii rejected the "cultured/uncultured" dichotomy but failed to provide incentives in the imperial capital for the development of the physical anthropology of Russians. Under him physical anthropology in Petersburg University remained a natural science, but this was likely the least typical of all the natural sciences. Koropchevskii's version of physical anthropology ideally required training in ethnography, archaeology, linguistics, psychology, the history of culture, religion, law, and sociology ("a subdivision of anthropology that treats public union in all its different forms").⁶⁴ The main object of his anthropography was neither *narodnost'* nor race, but *narod* as a biological-historical category and the ultimate category of the populist discourse.⁶⁵ Koropchevskii called this version of race science a "physiological approach" in anthropology (as opposed to a "morphological approach"),⁶⁶ but his weak conceptualization of the "physiological approach" and rather inconsistent revision of the radical (yet familiar to other anthropologists) views favored by Petri only further marginalized Petersburg anthropology, which was losing the competition

⁶³ On his dissertation defense, see TsGIASPb, F. 14. Op. 1. Vol. 4. D. 9045. Ll. 1–2; D.A. Koropchevskii, "Znachenie 'geograficheskikh provintsii' v etnogeneticheskom protsesse," *Ezhegodnik RAO*, vol. 1, ed. B.F. Adler (St. Petersburg: RAO, 1915), 3–255.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, esp. 24 and 116. See also D.A. Koropchevskii, "Tip i rasa v sovremennoi antropologii," in *Protokoly RAO pri IPU za 1893–1894 gg.* (St. Petersburg: RAO, 1895). Just consider the range of courses that he offered to his students: (1) The Hand in Anthropological Perspective; (2) Climatic Influence on Race; (3) History of the Family among Peoples of the Yellow Race; (4) On Height as a Race Indicator; (5) Religion of the Russian Fairy Tales; (5) The Role of Migrations in the Ethnogenetic Process; (7) On Peasant Houses in Ukraine; (8) Anthropological and Ethnographic Characteristics of Cherkessian-Adyg; Bukeyev Kyrgyz, Permiak, Turkmen, Jews, Karelians, and others; (9) Cultural Types of the Mongol Race; and so on. See also N.M. Mogilianskii, "Nauchnye vzgliady D. A. Koropchevskogo," *Ezhegodnik RAO*, vol. 1, ed. B.F. Adler (St. Petersburg: RAO, 1905), 263.

⁶⁵ Mogilianskii, "Nauchnye vzgliady D. A. Koropchevskogo," 265–266.

⁶⁶ Koropchevskii, "Znachenie 'geograficheskikh provintsii' v etnogeneticheskom protsesse," 255.

with the Moscow liberal school. As the historian Marina Loskoutova recently observed in writing about the proto-structuralist, landscape-focused period in the development of Russian geography, in general, the focus on the geographical environment reduced the importance of historical and ethnic diversity in a given region.⁶⁷ Probably due to this effect, Koropchevskii ended up with a concept of ethnicity that was bound to its immediate geographic landscape and thus was a more homogeneous and biological phenomenon than a diverse and cultural one.

An Uneasy Symbiosis: Imperial Framework for Nationalizing Anthropology

The next leading Petersburg University anthropologist, Fedor Kondratievich Volkov (1847–1918), known as Khfedir Vovk in Ukrainian, shared Koropchevskii's skepticism concerning the hierarchy of ethnography and anthropology, regarding the latter as a more advanced science. He personally practiced both disciplines and developed two different scientific identities. Volkov/Vovk's scientific persona, if carefully analyzed, provides a clue to at least one representative version of the two disciplines' mutual reinforcement in the late-imperial Russian context.

He was originally from Poltava Province. As a student, he studied physics and mathematics (first in Odessa University and then in Kiev University). He acquired an interest in ethnography through participation in the Kiev-based Ukrainophile society "Gromada"; then he continued his ethnographic studies of the Little Russian population in 1873–1874 under the auspices of the Southwestern Section of the IRGO.⁶⁸ In 1876 the society was shut down on charges of promoting Ukrainian "separatism."⁶⁹ After

⁶⁷ Marina Loskoutova, "A Motherland with a Radius of 300 Miles: Regional Identity in Russian Secondary and Post-Elementary Education from the Early Nineteenth Century to the War and Revolution," *European Review of History* 9, no. 1 (2002): 1–22.

⁶⁸ Among his early ethnographic works are *Programma Iugo-Zapadnogo Otdela IRGO dlia sobiraniia svedenii po etnografii* (Kiev, 1875) (Vovk produced all of it except for parts V, VI, and VIII); *Iuzhno-russkii ornament*, compiled by F.K. Volkov (Kiev, 1877); F.K. Volkov, "O sel'skikh iarmarkakh i o znachenii ikh dlia izucheniiia remeslennoi i kustarnoi promyshlennosti," *Zapiski Iugo-Zapadnogo Otdela IRGO za 1873 god* 1 (1874): 265–289; F. Kondratievich (F. Volkov), "Zadunaiskaia Sech' (po mestnym vospominaniiam i rasskazam)," *Kievskaiia starina* 5 (1883): 27–66. On this period of his life, see M. Hrushevsky, "Pamiaty Fedora Vovka. 29 chervnia 1918," *Ukraina* 1–2 (1918): 5–10.

⁶⁹ On the section and its activities in the Ukrainian context, see F. Savchenko, "Ukrains'ke naukovo-kul'turne samovyznachennia 1850–1876 rr.," *Ukraina* 1–2 (1929): 15–22; F.

that, the ethnographer Khfedir Vovk became known as a Ukrainian nationalist. In 1879 he fled the empire and started his life as a political émigré. In his spare time he studied the ethnography of the Ukrainian population in Dobrudja and Bulgaria. In 1887 Vovk finally settled in Paris, where he remained for twenty years.⁷⁰ There he enrolled in the Anthropological School and took courses with Paul Broca and Gabriel de Mortillet. Volkov was a member of the Paris Anthropological Society and the Paris Prehistoric Society and worked on the editorial board of the journal *L'Anthropologie*. Between 1901 and 1905, he taught somatic anthropology, prehistoric archaeology, and ethnography at the Russian Higher School for Social Sciences in Paris. His dissertation at Paris University ("Skeletal Foot Alterations in Primates and in Human Races") coincided with the beginning of the 1905 revolution. The change of political climate in Russia allowed this sixty-year-old political émigré and Ukrainian nationalist to return to his native country. He came back as Volkov (not Vovk) and settled not in Kyiv but in the imperial capital, where he took a position as custodian of the ethnographic section of the Russian Museum. At the time, the chair of geography and ethnography of Petersburg University was again vacant, and the teaching of ethnography and anthropology was interrupted. Volkov happened to be uniquely qualified to assume the position of university docent (beginning January 1, 1907).⁷¹ Thus the political biography of a Ukrainian nationally-minded intellectual was transformed into the academic biography of a European anthropologist who brought his symbolic capital to the post-1905 Petersburg academic setting. In the imperial capital Volkov successfully practiced both disciplines as equally respectable.

As a European anthropologist, Volkov was critical of the Russian version of anthropology, with its strong Populist ethnographic tinge.⁷² His

Savchenko, *Zaborona ukrainstva 1876 r.* (Khar'kiv and Kyiv, 1930); Ya. Vermenych, "Istoryko-kraeznavchi doslidzhennia v diial'nosti Pivdenno-Zakhidnogo viddilu Rus'kogo geografichnogo tovarystva (1873–1876 rr.)," *Kraeznavstvo* 1–4 (1999): 81–93.

⁷⁰ Volkov's daughter Galyna left the most detailed account of his life before emigration; she also compiled his comprehensive bibliography: Galyna Vovk, *Bibliografia prats' Khfedora Vovka (1847–1918)* [*Ukrain'ska bibliografia*, no. 3] (Kyiv, 1929). See especially "Perednova." See also O. A[lesho], "F.K. Vovk," *Visti pryrodnychoi Sektsii Ukrains'kogo Naukovogo Tovyarystva* 1, no. 2 (1918–1919): 33–35; *Khvedir Vovk, 1847–1918* (Kyiv: Literaturno-Naukovii, 1918), vols. 4–6, 177–179; Hrushevsky, "Pamiati Fedora Vovka. 29 chervnia 1918."

⁷¹ I.L. Tikhonov, "Vozvrashchenie na Olimp otechestvennoi nauki: K 150-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia F. K. Volkova," www.spbumag.nw.ru/97-98/no15-97/17.html.

⁷² F. Volkov, "Antropologija i ee universitetskoe prepodavanie (K peresmotru universitetskogo ustava)," *Ezhegodnik* RAO, ed. S.I. Rudenko (Petrograd: RAO, 1915), 105; F.

chair offered revised courses in anatomical and prehistoric anthropology and modern systemic ethnography,⁷³ along with extensive practical training in anthropometric technique.⁷⁴ In 1915 he published his plan for reforming the university chair of geography and anthropology, proposing the separation of the anthropological track from geography training.⁷⁵ Volkov dreamed of a special department of anthropology affiliated with other natural science departments. Such a department would have three chairs, specializing respectively in anatomic anthropology, prehistoric anthropology, and ethnography (which was thus completely separate from humanities and subjugated to anthropology). All three chairs were to be equipped with laboratories and specialized studies (*kabinet*), which together would compose a separate anthropological institute.⁷⁶ Volkov followed the example of *École des Hautes Études* so closely that he managed to provoke a real media scandal that reached as far as the meeting halls of the State Duma: he invited art studio models to his university anthropological laboratory to demonstrate to his students the technique of taking anthropometric measurements on women.⁷⁷ It took Paul Miliukov personally to defend Volkov in the Duma—the leader of the Russian liberals referred to shock and outrage among leading Western scholars at the charges against Professor Volkov.⁷⁸ As a leading Petersburg anthropologist, Volkov came to publicly embody modernity, the international if not cosmopolitan nature of the modern process of knowledge production, and the anti-colonial stance.

Indeed, at first glance, he bridged the gap between the liberal Moscow anthropology of imperial diversity and the Petersburg colonial anthropology that was under-recognized and underappreciated in Russia. Volkov eagerly supported those of his students who turned to the anthropology and ethnography of Russians, but his personal favorite research topic

Volkov, *Prepodavaniie antropologicheskoi nauki pri kafedre geografii so vremeni uchrezhdeniia otdel'noi dotsentury v 1907 godu* (This is a manuscript dated 1917; it is preserved in the Museum of SPbGU History. F. FIK. D. 338. L. 1–19). Recently it was published in I.L. Tikhonov, *Arkheologiya v Sankt-Peterburgskom universitete*, Appendix to Chapter 4, 257.

⁷³ F.K. Volkov, “Noveishie napravleniia v antropologicheskikh naukakh i blizhaishchie zadachi antropologii v Rossii,” *Ezhegodnik RAO VI* (1913): 1–8.

⁷⁴ Volkov, *Prepodavaniie antropologicheskoi nauki*, 261.

⁷⁵ Volkov, “Antropologiya i ee universitetskoe prepodavaniie,” 105.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Volkov, *Prepodavaniie antropologicheskoi nauki*, 262.

remained Ukrainian anthropology and ethnography. In “European” anthropology and Russian ethnography, he found a comfortable disguise for his other academic and political persona—that of a Ukrainian scholar and Ukrainian nationalist.

Volkov/Vovk managed to edit simultaneously *Materials on Rusynian-Ukrainian Ethnology* in L’viv⁷⁹ and *Materials on Russian Ethnography* in Petersburg.⁸⁰ He wrote and published in both Russian and Ukrainian.⁸¹ He earned a doctorate at Petrograd University in 1916 in recognition of his two publications: *Ethnographic Characteristics of the Ukrainian People* and *Anthropological Characteristics of the Ukrainian People*.⁸² His terminological preference for “Ukrainian people” over the more ethnographically justified and ideologically “correct” “Little Russians” (or “Little Russians of a given *uezd*,” which was overemployed by Moscow-oriented anthropologists) was not accidental. He aspired to scientifically legitimize a modern Ukrainian nation—it is this obviously political impetus that justified the rapprochement of anthropology and ethnography in his case. Since Vovk attempted his project in the Russian imperial context and, as it seems, was not convinced that the Ukrainian nation needed its own national state,⁸³ he abandoned his earlier studies of Galician Ukrainians with relative ease and concentrated on the population of the “Russian

⁷⁹ In 1903 Vovk arrived in L’viv by invitation from the *Naukove Tovarystvo im. Shevchenka* (Shevchenko Scientific Society). He assumed leadership of a group of “young nationalists and physicians” who collected anthropometric data in L’viv and in the provinces. Galyna Vovk, “Peredmovna,” in *Bibliografia prats’ Khfedora Vovka* (1847–1918), 5–13. In 1904 Vovk continued this project among the Carpathian population.

⁸⁰ Tikhonov, “Vozvrashchenie na Olimp.”

⁸¹ See *Materialy do Ukains’ko-Russ’koi etnol’ogii*, ed. F. Vovk, vols. 1–7 (L’viv, 1899–1904); F.K. Vovk, *Antropologichni doslidy ukrains’kogo naselennia Galychyny, Bukovyny i Ugorshchyny*. I. Gutsyly (L’viv, 1908); etc.

⁸² F. Volkov, “Antropologicheskie osobennosti ukrainskogo naroda,” in *Ukrainskii narod v proshlom i nastoiaschem*, ed. F.K. Volkov, M.S. Hrushevskii, M.M. Kovalevskii, F.E. Korsh et al., vol. 2 (Petrograd: Obshchestvennaia pol’za, 1916): 427–254; Volkov, “Etnograficheskie osobennosti ukrainskogo naroda,” in *ibid.*, 455–647.

⁸³ This impression is supported by the fact of Vovk’s friendship with M.P. Dragomanov. In emigration he belonged to Dragomanov’s immediate circle and shared his reputation as a liberal constitutionalist and Ukrainophile who opposed radical Ukrainian separatism. As confirmed by another close acquaintance of Dragomanov, A. Bauler, he envisioned Russia as a federal state with self-governing regions. She described Volkov as a like-minded follower of Dragomanov, as a “seemingly uncompromising Ukrainophile, who was at the same time skeptical about everything.” A. Bauler, “Vospominaniia o M. P. Dragomanove. S predisloviiem G. V. Vernadskogo,” *Novyi Zhurnal* 8 (1944): 328, 330. I am grateful to Alexander Semyonov for drawing my attention to this memoir.

Ukraine.”⁸⁴ The geography of this Ukraine can be easily reconstructed from a catalog of his and his students’ anthropological expeditions: they worked in Chernigov, Poltava, Kherson, Kursk, Voronezh, Kiev, Volyn’, Podol, and Ekaterinoslav provinces and in Kuban’ *oblast*.’ They also planned to study Taurida and Bessarabia provinces.⁸⁵ Vovk used the data collected in these expeditions to construct a pure and homogeneous Ukrainian anthropological type—complete nonsense from the point of view of Moscow liberal anthropology, with its universal imperial mixed physical type. Anuchin did not miss the opportunity to criticize Volkov/Vovk for “confusing *narodnost*’ (or *narod*), tribe, and race— notions that differ significantly.” He immediately dismissed the possibility that “Ukrainians represent an exception among all European peoples,” that is, that all of them “belong to one race.”⁸⁶ However, “European” anthropologist Vovk continued his line of argumentation, rejecting the very possibility of racial mixture in the case of the Ukrainians: “It is wrong to treat Ukrainians as a population that evolved from the mixing of two races—the light- and the dark-haired. We should accept as a fact their belonging to one dark-haired race with local blond dashes.”⁸⁷ In addition, this “Ukrainian anthropological type” was characterized by tallness and a real short-headedness (brachycephalic skull), narrow face and nose, long legs, and so on. Vovk argued that it was closely related to the Southern and Western Slavic racial types (excluding Poles!).⁸⁸ Poles, as competitors for “Ukraine,” thus posited one important anthropological frontier of the “Ukrainian race.” Another anthropological frontier separated Ukrainians from “Great Russians” and “White Russians”⁸⁹—Vovk used exactly this uneven set of categories (ethnographic versus national) to designate this frontier. He wrote that the tripartite division of Slavs had occurred before the Mongol invasion, yet the influence of the Mongols on anthropological processes was nevertheless decisive: after the invasion, “the northern group and a part of the intermediate group formed the Great Russian tribe, which incorporated a mass of Finnish elements”; the remnants of the intermediate group absorbed its neighbors and became White Russians. And only the South Russian group preserved its initial racial purity (the

⁸⁴ Volkov, “Antropologicheskie osobennosti ukrainiskogo naroda,” 430.

⁸⁵ For more details, see *ibid.*, 430–431.

⁸⁶ D.N. Anuchin, “Ob antropologii Ukraintsev,” *RAJ* 1–2 (1918): 51–52.

⁸⁷ Volkov, “Antropologicheskie osobennosti ukrainiskogo naroda,” 437.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 452.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 453.

Dinarian type) and developed a completely original culture. Thus modern Ukrainians came into being: their national body had been formed in ancient times, and their national culture (the subject of ethnography) reflected its purity and developed quite independently of the Great Russian, White Russian, and Polish cultures.

In many ways this was a resurrection—in the disguises of modern anthropology and modern systematizing ethnography—of the old Ukrainophile romantic ethnography of Vovk's youth. In the words of Serhy Yekelchuk, "If there was a space for cultural and political self-identification of the Ukrainian patriot in the Russian Empire in the last third of the nineteenth century, it was his or her own body."⁹⁰ In the romantic Ukrainian literature of the time, the ideal Ukrainian girl was identified as a peasant beauty with dark hair, eyes, and eyebrows, tall and stately. A dark-haired, tall, broad-shouldered Cossack from the glorious past personified the ideal Ukrainian male.⁹¹ Vovk recoded these romantic images in the language of modern anthropology. His mass anthropometric data were gathered exclusively among the peasant population. His ethnography likewise studied a peasant culture that was understood as the original product of historical evolution of the racially pure national body. Unlike earlier romantic Ukrainophiles who were dreaming up Ukrainian "bodies," traditions, and national attires, Vovk and his students recorded types of clothes and forms of everyday life that indeed characterized the population of their imagined "Russian Ukraine." However, they were governed by an obvious ideological agenda, and therefore they tended to homogenize the Ukrainian population and reduce its differences.

The Anthropology of Russian Nationalism

It is one of the paradoxes of the Russian imperial situation that Petersburg University became such an important locus of Ukrainian anthropological nationalism and allowed the blossoming of Volkov/Vovk and his anthropology-ethnography of Ukraine. Another paradox is the fact that Kiev University became the main center of *Russian national* anthropology, with

⁹⁰ Serhy Yekelchuk, "The Body and National Myth: Motifs from the Ukrainian National Revival in the Nineteenth Century," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 7, no. 2 (1993): 31.

⁹¹ A brilliant analysis of the romantic vision of the Ukrainian body is offered in *ibid.*, esp. pp. 54–57.

psychiatry professor Ivan Alekseevich Sikorskii (1842–1919) (father of the renowned aircraft designer) as the leading proponent of Russian racial nationalism.⁹² Sikorskii aspired to scientifically reimagine the empire as a dual system, with the “Russian” racial core surrounded by the racially inferior “non-Russian” periphery. His school of anthropology was less interested in mass anthropometric studies or prehistoric archaeology, preferring instead socially oriented research, medical experiments on humans, psychiatric speculation, and the advancement of a general proto-eugenicist agenda. In addition, this school had an aversion to the ethnographic approach in population studies, which was understandable, given the fact that ethnography in southern Russia (as well as in the western borderlands of the empire) was successfully embraced by proto-national and, later, nationalist intellectuals and movements as a sublimated language of Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish, Lithuanian, or Belarusian nationality. In these very specific circumstances Sikorskii, who rightly enjoyed a reputation as a loyal supporter of the autocratic regime and as an official Russian nationalist, was denied the right to establish an Anthropological Society at Kiev University, when similar societies already functioned in Moscow, Petersburg, and a few other cities of the empire.

The decision of the Kiev Educational District’s authorities perfectly exemplified the strategic relativism of the imperial order.⁹³ Their judgment was based on the perception of a close proximity between ethnography and physical anthropology (which was, as we know, not as obvious to the practitioners of these sciences). Such proximity did not pose a problem in principle—only in the “Little Russian” lands. In the eyes of the rector of Kiev St. Vladimir University, ethnography was a politically subversive science, and so, by extension, was anthropology. This perception had nothing to do with Sikorskii’s actual understanding of race science. He personally denied any connection between ethnography and physical

⁹² On the history of Sikorskii’s anthropological initiatives in Kiev, see Kiev City Archive (GAK), F. 16. Op. 465. D. 255. Ll. 25–28; and also the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine (TsGIAU), F. 707. Op. 262. D. 8. 8 ll.; Marina Mogilner, “Entsiklopediia russkogo natsionalisticheskogo proekta” [Encyclopedia of the Russian nationalist project], *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2003): 225–240; V. Menzhulin, *Drugoi Sikorskii. Neudobnye stranitsy istorii psikhiatrii* (Kyiv, 2004). All of Sikorskii’s major works have recently been reprinted in new adaptations of Russian racial nationalism in *Russkaia rasovaia teoria do 1917 goda*, ed. and preface by V.B. Avdeev (Moscow, 2002).

⁹³ On the concept of strategic relativism, see Ilya Gerasimov, Sergey Glebov, Jan Kusber, Marina Mogilner, and Alexander Semyonov, “New Imperial History and the Challenges of Empire,” in *Empire Speaks Out*, eds. Gerasimov et al., 3–32.

anthropology, which “represents the newest scientific discipline, and so far only a limited number of specialists are privileged to know it.” Sikorskii wrote this in a special memo that he attached to the application file of the Anthropological Society.⁹⁴ The Kiev professor believed that anthropology alone could scientifically undermine claims of Ukrainian, Polish, or any other cultural ethnography (and nationalism). As he explained, ethnography stressed differences inside the “Aryan Russian race,” while these cultural differences were scientifically irrelevant: “Splitting up into Great Russians, Little Russians, and White Russians is based on nonexistent, minor, linguistic rather than anthropological characteristics.”⁹⁵

No Ukrainians here! There are no living exemplars of Ukrainians, there are no Ukrainians among the cemeteries’ population: no Ukrainians on earth, no Ukrainians under the ground. Therefore, if we base our judgments and conclusions on the population’s physical composition, its breed and nature, we have to conclude that in Ukraine there is no such population that has a special nature: here the population is the same as beyond Ukraine. It is natural to conclude that “Ukraine” and “Ukrainians” are geographic and political, but not anthropological and ethnic terms.⁹⁶

Sikorskii’s version of anthropology could have provided the nationalizing imperial state with strong arguments in favor of a “big Russian nation” of the same racial “breed.” However, for the state officials in Ukraine, preventing a rejuvenation of ethnography within the science of anthropology was more urgent than racializing Russianness. In fact, Sikorskii was not the only one who attached a personal memo to the Anthropological Society’s application file—the rector of Kiev University did the same. He drew his superiors’ attention to the similarity of research objects of ethnography and anthropology. This, the rector explained, could “easily generate suspicions, especially in our region; they are even more justified as no one can vouch for future members of the society from elements who are alien to the university and independent of it.”⁹⁷ In his report to the Ministry of Public Education, the overseer of the Kiev Educational District quoted the concerns expressed by the rector, and the ministry completely agreed with the rector’s “suspicions.” Sikorskii never re-

⁹⁴ TsGIAU, F. 707. Op. 262. D. 8. L. 2 rev.

⁹⁵ I.A. Sikorskii, *Russkie i ukraintsy* (Glava iz etnologicheskogo katekhizisa): Doklad v klube russkikh natsionalistov v Kieve 7 fevralia 1913 g.) (Kiev: Kievskii klub russkikh natsionalistov, 1913).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁹⁷ TsGIAU, F. 707. Op. 262. D. 8. L. 3–8.

ceived official permission to establish an Anthropological Society at his university.⁹⁸

The Anthropology of the Russian *Mission Civilisatrice*

In the Volga region of the empire, the same collision between particularistic ethnographic discourses and the universalizing approach of race science played out differently. Here the Enlightenment ideology of the Russian civilizing mission among the non-Muslim (mostly Finno-Ugric local pagan population) and non-Orthodox *inorodtsy* preserved its influence into the early twentieth century, and ethnography was a part of this discourse. Local Muslims were also subjected to ethnographic investigation by academics and amateurs, who occasionally included, besides scholars affiliated with Kazan University, representatives of the Muslim population, or Christian missionaries active in the region. However, this ethnography was developing independently of the “civilizing mission” discourse and was not considered politically subversive. Tatar nationalism was rather a late phenomenon; at the turn of the century, it did not claim ethnography as an important identity-building field. On the other hand, Muslims were regarded as difficult objects for assimilation or Christianization; their cultural complex represented a specific Eurasian otherness and was to be studied with respect and in its own categories. The Oriental Department of Kazan University, which by the nineteenth century had become a Russian “window on the East,” pursued this task with some success.⁹⁹

In this imperial university, physical anthropology was firmly separated from ethnography—a striking fact if we consider that scholars specializing in both disciplines often excavated the same archaeological sites, described the populations of the same villages, and were personally connected as members of local educated society. The ideological and epistemological divides separating them were stronger than the constraints of a common institutional setting.

In 1878 the Society for Archaeology, History, and Ethnography (*Obshchestvo Arkheologii, Istorii i Etnografii pri Kazanskom Universitete*, OIAE) was established at Kazan University. From the outset the society enjoyed official patronage from the overseer of the Kazan Educational

⁹⁸ Ibid., Ll. 4–4 rev.

⁹⁹ Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

District.¹⁰⁰ The task of the OIAE was defined as the archaeological, historical, and ethnographic study of the “past and present of the Russian and alien [*inorodcheskogo*] population of the territories of the former Bolgar-Khazar and Kazan-Astrakhan kingdoms [*tsarstv*].”¹⁰¹ The OIAE ethnographers accepted as a fact that all peoples of the region, regardless of their degree of present development or “degeneration,” had experienced the positive influence of Russian civilization, which helped them to climb the evolutionary ladder. The emphasis on the multicultural nature of the region in the past only supported the argument about the gradual cultural unification and assimilation of non-Muslim aliens into the Russian culture of the present.¹⁰² The OIAE members believed that their research activities were of practical significance to the imperial authorities, who needed a better knowledge of the Russian regions in historical, cultural, and demographic terms in order to rule more effectively.¹⁰³ The list of relevant research issues composed by the OIAE ethnographers included “Russian colonization, enlightenment of the *inorodtsy*, Russians’ impact on the *inorodtsy* and vice versa, the specifics of governing in this land of aliens (*inorodcheskii krai*), resistance to Russian domination, and discontent of the *inorodtsy*.”¹⁰⁴

The OIAE generally attracted scholars from humanities departments, while the Kazan University Society of the Students of Nature (*Obshchestvo Estestvoispytatelei*, OE), which dated to 1869, appealed to scientists and medical doctors whose epistemology was Darwinian evolutionism and whose political views were very much to the left of loyal OIAE members. While the OIAE members worked with cultural categories, the OE members studied races of the Volga region. The commonality

¹⁰⁰ National Archive of the Tatarstan Republic (NART), F. 92. Op. 1. D. 13319.

¹⁰¹ NART, F. 977. Sovet. D. 6280. Ll. 666–676; D. 6279. Ll. 1–11.

¹⁰² For an overview of OIAE activities, see I.B. Sidorova, “Obshchestvo arkheologii, istorii i etnografii pri Kazanskom universitete: nekotorye problemy izucheniiia,” in *Istoriia i Istoriki v Kazanskom universitete*, part 2 (Kazan: KGU, 2005): 7–21; A.A. Khabibullin, *Izuchenie istorii narodov Srednego Povolzh’ia i Priural’ia v Obshchestve arkheologii, istorii i etnografii pri Kazanskom universitete (1878–1917)* (Kazan: KGU, 1979). The most interesting analysis of OIAE ethnography is offered in Geraci, *Window on the East*, esp. chapter 5, “Kazan University, Civic Life, and the Politics of Regional Ethnography,” chapter 6, “Ivan N. Smirnov and the Multan Case,” and chapter 9, “Nikolai F. Katanov: *Inorodets* in the Russian Academy.”

¹⁰³ “O zadachakh deiatel’nosti Kazanskogo OAIE i o vozmozhnom sodeistvii Obshchestvu so storony zhitelei mestnogo kraia. Rech’ tovarishche predsedatel’ia Obshchestva O. M. Shpilevskogo,” in *Izvestia OAIE pri IKU*, no. 3 (1880–1882) (Kazan: IKU, 1884), 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

of interests, and to some degree of methods of research, could not compete with such factors as epistemological differences (the natural-science anthropological paradigm versus the traditional cultural ethnographic paradigm) and ideological disagreements (democracy, universalism, and a presumption that modern knowledge is a self-evident value versus enlightened imperialism and Russian nationalism with components of regionalism combined with strong statism). Kazan anthropologists of the OE did not observe and describe traditions and rituals—instead they took mass anthropometric measurements of the non-Russian peoples of the region and collected old skulls. Accurate and verifiable methodologies of measurement and calculations guaranteed the meticulousness of their conclusions and the objective character of their knowledge about human diversity. The less an OE member relied on cultural/ideological considerations, the more objective his/her results were. As the Kazan anthropologist, medical doctor, and future professor Boris Nikolaevich Vishnevskii reminded his colleagues, all students of regional anthropology had to remember the words of German anthropology professor Martin: “From the point of view of physical anthropology, there are no Germans, no Swedes, and no French—there are only morphological types.”¹⁰⁵ Obviously, such an approach was incompatible with the ethnography of the Russian civilizing mission among non-Russian peoples of the region.

The infamous “Multan case” (1892–1896)—a legal case against a group of Votiaks (today, Udmurts) from the village of Multan who were accused in the ritual killing of a Russian peasant from a neighboring village—revealed the academic and political implications of Kazan evolutionist ethnography. In this trial the leading expert witness for the prosecution was Ivan Nikolaevich Smirnov (1856–1904), history professor and OAIE ethnographer specializing in the Finno-Ugric peoples of the Volga-Ural region.¹⁰⁶ He conducted field research among the Cheremis, Mordva, Permiaks, and Votiaks, but the purpose and meaning of his ethnography are better represented in such general works as his *Program for Collecting Data on the Russification [obrusenie] of Eastern Russia's Inorodtsy* (published by the OAIE in 1895).¹⁰⁷ Smirnov approached minority

¹⁰⁵ B.N. Vishnevskii, “Antropologičeskoe kak nauka i ee universitetskoe predpodanie,” *Zhurnal Kazanskogo Mediko-Antropologičeskogo Obščestva* 1 (1921): 20.

¹⁰⁶ Smirnov edited OAIE *Izvestiia*, was elected to its council, served as a vice-chair of the society, and in 1902 became an honored member.

¹⁰⁷ See also his “Obrusenie inorodtsev i zdachi obrusitel'noi politiki,” *Istoricheskii vestnik* 47 (1892): 752–765.

ethnic groups as evolving historical and cultural entities (not biological constants). He concluded his book on Votiak ethnography with the following optimistic statement: "It will not take another hundred years before the last Votiak becomes Russian."¹⁰⁸ In the 1870s and 1880s, Smirnov was one of the most consistent evolutionists among Russian humanities professors. His ethnographic works usually contained historic and geographic sketches, while the real analysis was in the chapters on family forms, religion (from fetishism and animism to the highest—monotheist—stage), and oral tradition.¹⁰⁹

In the courtroom, Smirnov speculated that the "survival" of paganism among Votiaks betrayed their practice of human sacrifice in the past and supported the assumption that this practice may have survived to the present. The expert never provided direct ethnographic evidence that the Multan Votiaks continued to engage in human sacrifice, yet his evolutionist methodology (in particular, Tylor's comparative method) allowed deductions on the basis of a general knowledge of human evolution.

As perceptively noted by Robert Geraci, Smirnov's ethnographic methodology combined the evolutionist belief in the physical uniformity of humankind with an idiosyncratic interest in differences and cultural boundaries between ethnic groups,¹¹⁰ and this was not unique to nineteenth-century evolutionism.¹¹¹ Like many of his OIAE colleagues, Smirnov believed in a common cause of human development and saw ethnicities as the actors of this evolutionary process. However, not all ethnicities, in his view, were capable of independently reaching the highest levels of the evolutionary ladder—their progress depended on support from more gifted peoples. In the Volga-Ural region (and the empire at large) Russians were this gifted guardian of the less fortunate aliens.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ I.N. Smirnov, "Votiaki. Istoriko-Etnograficheskii ocherk." *Izvetiia OAIE pri IKU* 7, no. 2–3 (1890): 308.

¹⁰⁹ Smirnov, "Votiaki"; Smirnov, *Zadachi i znachenie mestnoi etnografii* (Kazan: IKU, 1891); Smirnov, "Permiaki. Istoriko-Etnograficheskii ocherk," *Izvetiia OAIE pri IKU* 9, no. 3 (1891); Smirnov, "Mordva. Istoriko-Etnograficheskii ocherk," *Izvetiia OAIE pri IKU* 10, no. 1 (1892); etc.

¹¹⁰ Robert Geraci, "Ethnic Minorities, Anthropology, and Russian National Identity on Trial: The Multan Case, 1892–96," *Russian Review* 59 (2000): 530–554; Geraci, *Window on the East*, 195–222.

¹¹¹ George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York and London: Free Press and Collier Macmillan, 1987).

¹¹² Geraci, "Ethnic Minorities, Anthropology, and Russian National Identity on Trial," 536–538.

The democratizing potential of Smirnov's evolutionism decreased as the Multan trial progressed. Facing the need to recast his scientific evolutionism in categories meaningful to the court, Smirnov eventually had to racialize the border between the "half-savage" Votiaks and their Russian civilization guardians. Soon after the Multan trial (the case was resolved in favor of the accused Udmurts), Smirnov took part in the debates about the proper focus for a new ethnographic museum planned in St. Petersburg (the Russian Museum). Fresh from the courtroom battles, Smirnov now more readily spoke the language of race. He insisted that the museum "should obviously depict the white race with its representatives: the Slavic peoples (Russians, Poles, Serbs, Bulgarians), the Lithuanians and the Latvians [...]." The second group "should be constituted by the representatives of the yellow race—the Mongols, the Kalmyks, the Buryats, the Chinese, the Manchu. The third one should be composed of the smaller groups—groups of mixed character, as far as their physical type goes, and differentiated from each other mainly according to their language—the Finns [...], the Turkic peoples, the Samoeds, the Chukchi, the Ainu."¹¹³

The overarching purpose of such an exhibition would be to show the universal significance of Russian culture. In other words, the Russian Museum was to become "a *cheval de bataille* of Russian ethnography."¹¹⁴ In his strategic planning, Smirnov stopped short of positing the Russian race as endowed with supreme qualities. It is obvious that the Kazan ethnographers' adoption of the concept of race could potentially have ruined the mythology of the civilizing mission that functioned as the main self-legitimizing imperial myth for intellectuals such as Smirnov. If the objects of the Russian civilizing mission ceased to be cultural-historical entities capable of progressive (if carefully governed) development, the mission itself would lose all meaning.

Smirnov's colleagues of the Kazan OE escaped this trap by categorically separating race from ethnicity. OE member and medical doctor M.M. Khomiakov, who studied the physical anthropology of the same Votiaks, denied any value of ethnographic scientific expertise in the "Multan case" ("all of this is very far from science"). In his anthropometric work published in Kazan in 1910 (*On the Craniological Type of the Chepetsk Votiaks*), Khomiakov stated that "neither historical nor

¹¹³ Ivan Smirnov, "Neskol'ko slov po voprosu ob organizatsii etnograficheskogo otdela Russkogo Muzeia Imperatora Aleksandra III," *Izvestia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk* 15, no. 2 (1901): 229–230. Quoted in translation in Sergei Kan, *Lev Shternberg*.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

ethnographic data prove the supposition that in the course of the past two or three centuries, the Votiaks actually sacrificed humans.”¹¹⁵ Khomiakov’s own data were mathematically verifiable and, he believed, their implications were not speculative. As his colleague Vishnevskii exclaimed during Khomiakov’s dissertation defense: “Just think about the enormous and serious misconceptions that can penetrate science if the conclusions of a given researcher are mistaken!”¹¹⁶ Khomiakov and his fellow physical anthropologists tried to avoid such misconceptions by all means. Another colleague of his who was present at the defense protested even against Khomiakov’s occasional use of the expression “an anthropo-ethnographic point of view”—deeming such a combination unscientific and mistaken.¹¹⁷

Even the change of ethnographic paradigm in Kazan under the influence of the new ethnography and geography professor (1911) Bruno Fridrikhovich Adler (1874–1942)¹¹⁸ did not alter the estrangement that existed between local schools of ethnography and physical anthropology. A graduate of Moscow University, Adler continued his training in Leipzig under Friedrich Ratzel. Later he developed his anthropogeographic method in Petersburg, where his studies focused on the overlap of ethnographic, climatic, and cultural-linguistic zones.¹¹⁹ The move toward geography and linguistics further alienated Kazan anthropologists, whose discourse was increasingly becoming medicalized and politically radicalized. The latter created a special group (*kruzhok*) “of Kazan anthropologists and medical doctors who demonstrated an interest in anthropology and distinguished themselves by research work in this field.”¹²⁰ In early 1921 they formally departed from the old OE and organized the Kazan Medical-Anthropological Society, which worked to establish a chair of anthropology in the Physics and Mathematics Department of Kazan University. They wanted to participate in the construction of the Soviet “empire of

¹¹⁵ M.M. Khomiakov, O kraniologicheskom tipe chepetskikh votiakov v sviazi s obshchim razvitiem votskoi narodnosti. Antropologicheskoe issledovanie (Kazan: IKU, 1910), 46-7.

¹¹⁶ B.N. Vishnevskii, “Arifmeticheskie oshibki v antropologicheskikh rabotakh d-ra M. M. Khomiakova,” *Zhurnal Kazanskogo Mediko-Antropologicheskogo Obshchestva* 1 (1921): 269.

¹¹⁷ “Zashchita dissertatsii,” *Kazanskii Talegraf*, no. 5385, March 24, 1911, 4.

¹¹⁸ N.V. Zorin, *Bruno Fridrikhovich Adler* (Kazan: KGU, 2001); E.P. Busygin and N.V. Zorin, *Etnografia v Kazanskom universitete* (Kazan: KGU, 2002).

¹¹⁹ L. Ia. Toma, “Bruno Fridrikhovich Adler,” *Voprosy Istorii* 8 (2004): 136–143.

¹²⁰ “V Mediko-Antropologicheskome Obshchestve,” *Zhurnal Kazanskogo Mediko-Antropologicheskogo Obshchestva* 1 (1921): 273.

knowledge,” and they doubted that the old-school ethnographers could be useful for this task: “It is life itself that persistently pushes to the fore the issue of training of researcher-anthropologists equipped with modern scientific methods. They would be able to start a methodical investigation of the Russian peoples.”¹²¹

The Liberal Anthropology of Imperial Diversity Becoming a “Dead Language”

In fact, “methodical investigation of the Russian population” was a stable trope readily spotted in various texts of early-twentieth-century Russian scholars and politicians, and anthropologists were its most enthusiastic users. Unlike Kazan, in other academic settings, the acute need for modern knowledge about the population facilitated the rapprochement of ethnography and physical anthropology. In the last years of the old regime, ethnographers and anthropologists increasingly allied their forces in responding to the challenges of political nationalism and the crisis of imperial order, with its inconsistent and “unscientific” population politics. For example, the IRGO Committee for Russian Ethnographic Cartography (officially created in 1910, albeit barely active in the first five years of its existence¹²²)—alongside linguistic, musical, and traditional ethnographic sections—included anthropology. In 1915 Anuchin, who had been rather cautious about various projects of centralization of population studies in the empire, joined the Committee for Investigating Natural Productive Forces (KEPS), sponsored by the Academy of Sciences. He also proposed the establishment of another state committee to study the Russian population as the major “productive force.”¹²³ The idea that population groups can differ not only culturally, historically, and linguistically but also as productive units, biologically suitable or unsuitable for specific activities in specific conditions, led the anthropological “objective” methods of population studies to expand into ethnography. Amid the Great War, which demanded the mobilization of all available resources from

¹²¹ “K voprosu o prepodavanii antropologii v Kazanskom universitete,” *ibid.*, 270–271.

¹²² V.I. B., “Sostavlenie etnograficheskikh kart Rossii,” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1–2 (1916), 149–151; Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 45–51.

¹²³ D.N. Anuchin, “Izuchenie proizvoditel’nykh sil Rossii,” *Zemlevedenie* 23, no. 1–2 (1916): 97–103. On KEPS, see A.V. Kol’tsov, *Sozdanie i deiatel’nost’ po izucheniiu estestvennykh proizvoditel’nykh sil Rossii, 1915–1930* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1999).

participating countries, the Russian state was at least theoretically interested in precisely this type of population studies. At the same time, it would be simplistic to conclude that the shift in population politics provoked by the war provided grounds for the long-awaited union of scholar-experts with the state, and that this statist alliance reached its logical culmination in the Soviet empire of knowledge.¹²⁴ Anuchin's change of heart (and that of the Moscow liberal anthropological network in general) regarding the state-sponsored joint initiatives of ethnographers and anthropologists was influenced by the weakening of the imperial state itself. As is well known, in the course of World War I, various popular and volunteer associations and organizations took upon themselves the responsibilities of the failed state. The year of 1915, which witnessed the creation of KEPS, was also marked, for example, by the foundation of *Zemgor*—a united committee for army supplies formed by *zemstvo* and city unions. *Zemgor* simply took upon itself crucial responsibilities of the state, such as delivering goods to the army, distributing commercial orders, organizing medical-sanitary services, and settling refugees. Under such circumstances, initiatives like the KEPS did not entail ideological alliance with the imperial regime. On the contrary, such organizations pushed out old state institutions and sought to redistribute state resources in favor of the efficient public and academic associations that would prepare the postwar rearrangements of the old imperial political space.¹²⁵ By 1917, leading Russian anthropologists and ethnographers unanimously requested state support and state resources for the systematic and well-coordinated study of the Russian population as national and productive units. The chair of the Petrograd IRGO, academician S.F. Ol'denburg, who in 1915 disagreed with Anuchin that the population should be treated as the major productive force, in early 1917 initiated a multidisciplinary "Committee for Investigating the Tribal [*plemennai*] Composition of the Russian Population" (KIPS).¹²⁶ The KIPS got its first state subsidy from the revolutionary

¹²⁴ David L. Hoffman, "European Modernity and Soviet Socialism," in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, eds. D. Hoffman and Y. Kotsonis (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000): 245–260; Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis: 1914–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); John Horn, ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*.

¹²⁵ Ilya Gerasimov, *Modernism and Public Reform in Late Imperial Russia: Rural Professionals and Self-Organization, 1905–30* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

¹²⁶ Izvestiia Komissii po izucheniiu plemennogo sostava naseleniia Rossii. I. Ob uchrezhdenii Komissii po izucheniiu plemennogo sostava naseleniia Rossii (Petrograd, 1917), 3.

Provisional Government, and again this was not a classical modern alliance between the state and scientific experts in population politics. As a consulting body of the revolutionary government, the KIPS implemented the common ideal of the Russian progressive civil society (*obshchestvennost'*)—a democratically governed and rationally construed and organized empire.

Contrary to the latest historiographic tendency stressing continuities between the pre- and post-1917 periods of Russian history, I argue that the October Revolution dramatically changed the nature of the alliance between population experts and the state, and the anthropologist-ethnographer collaboration within it. Obviously, after the revolution and the civil war, the self-organizing public and academic networks were destroyed. The scarcity of resources and their concentration by the Bolshevik state made the struggle for personal (physical) and academic survival the most pressing task. This structural situation increased the need for each scholarly discipline to prove its practical value to the regime and its strategic importance for the class struggle. The only alternative to alliance with the state remained social, academic, political, and ultimately physical, marginalization and eventually annihilation. Of course, like experts in other sciences, many ethnographers and anthropologists looked forward to joining forces with the radical reformist regime, which valued scientific governance and needed knowledge about the population to implement the project of progressive Marxist evolutionism.¹²⁷ However, it is also important to remember that in each case the choice in favor of a scientific alliance with the Bolshevik state was made in the context of a more global, and at the same time very mundane, issue of survival.

Another crucial factor was generational and social changes that affected pre-revolutionary ethnographers and anthropologists during the revolutions and the civil war. Many of them died, emigrated, were killed, or were forced out of the field by their more politically conscious fellows. It is not accidental that early Soviet ethnography was dominated by populist ethnographers who participated in the revolutionary movement and experienced prison and exile (such as Shternberg, V. Bogoraz, and V. Lokhel'son). Among anthropologists, Anuchin attained the highest formal recognition. After the February Revolution he received a full-scale anthropological chair at Moscow University, more hours of anthropology teaching, and mandatory status for his courses.¹²⁸ After the October Revo-

¹²⁷ Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 60.

¹²⁸ V.V. Bunak, "Deiatel'nost' D. N. Anuchina v oblasti antropologii," 1; Proshenie D. Anuchina in TsIAM. F. 418. Op. 95. D. 890. Ll. 1–1 rev.

lution, Anuchin's chair extended into the university Institute of Anthropology, which was named after him soon after his death (1923). However, this institutional success and other lesser-known achievements¹²⁹ should not overshadow the complete disintegration of the old liberal self-organizing anthropological network. The Russian Empire as a "natural" setting for a liberal anthropology of imperial diversity was no more; liberalism as an influential ideology and epistemology did not survive World War I, and its crises was a truly global phenomenon. Bolshevik radical modernism and anti-imperial rhetoric and nationalizing policies seemed to require another type of "modern knowledge" about population.¹³⁰ Therefore, those physical anthropologists who retained their traditional focus on nature rather than nurture had to resort to "adaptive ideological behavior"¹³¹ in an attempt to employ the language of power to legitimize their studies and to find ways to participate (individually, not as a discipline) in ethnographic, applied sanitary, or eugenicist projects. The two most attractive alternatives were to further develop the program of "productive force" studies (establishing biological limits for population relocations, examining the impact of urbanization and environmental changes on different population groups, proposing optimal medical and sanitary regulations for different industries, etc.) and to embrace a eugenicist social agenda. The title of the main journal of Russian eugenicists, the *Russian Eugenicist Journal*, seemed to refer directly to the *Russian Anthropological Journal*, which continued throughout the early Soviet period without embracing any special Soviet research agenda or methodology. Many

¹²⁹ Along with the Moscow anthropological chair, new short-lived chairs emerged in Odessa, Kiev, and Khar'kov universities. For some time, chairs of anthropology functioned in Kostroma, Samara, and probably in some other provincial universities. In Petrograd the university chair inherited Volkov's students S.I. Rudenko and D.I. Zolotarev. In the early 1920s anthropology as a special course was offered in the Petrograd and Kiev geography institutes, in Moscow Pedological and Archaeological Institute, in Khar'kov medical courses, in the Kazan Pedagogical Institute and Eastern Academy, in the Northern Caucasus State University, and in a number of other institutes. For an overview of the post-1917 situation in physical anthropology, see Marina Mogilner, "Conclusion: Did Russian Physical Anthropology Become Soviet?" in *Homo Imperii*.

¹³⁰ Terry Martin, *An Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); V.M. Alpatov, *150 iazykov i politika: 1917–1997* (Moscow: Institut Vostokovedeniia RAN, 1997).

¹³¹ On the "adaptive ideological behavior" of Soviet scientists, see Mark B. Adams, "Science, Ideology, and Structure: The Kol'tsov Institute, 1900–1970," in *The Social Context of Soviet Science*, eds. Linda Lubrano and Susan G. Solomon (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 194.

physical anthropologists preferred this outlet for themselves to assisting ethnographers in their work of demarcation of ethnic boundaries and nationalities' territorial, economic, and political statuses.

The terrible experience of World War II and the postwar colonial revolutions discredited the old race science worldwide and inspired a new reflection on the cultural and political foundations of racial thinking. However, all this did not affect Soviet physical anthropology, which lost its interpretative power as a language of modernity some time ago and has never become a medium of postmodern reflection on diversity.

Ethnography, Marxism, and Soviet Ideology

Sergei Alymov

In the history of Soviet ethnography, the introduction of Marxism is among the few episodes that have repeatedly attracted the attention of scholars. Indeed it is (or appears to be) among the most exhaustively studied such episodes. This is quite understandable, for this turning point considerably shaped the development of the discipline throughout the entire Soviet period. The wave of discussions, congresses, and reorganizations that reached its peak in 1929–1932 was described in Soviet historiography as the “creative mastering of Marxism” and, of course, evaluated positively, although the calls of “leftists” to abandon ethnography were mentioned with understandable disgust.¹ Yuri Slezkine put this in the proper historical context of Stalin’s Great Break, his cultural revolution, and the Bolsheviks’ takeover of the Academy.² The results of this campaign were dramatic indeed: imposition of Marxism-Leninism as the only acceptable theoretical framework; various reorganizations in the institutional structure of the discipline; and rude, highly politicized, and often unproductive discussions. All of these were accompanied by repressions that decimated the ranks of new Bolshevik “cadres” perhaps even more than those of old “bourgeois specialists.” The narrative that Slezkine conveys, though, is that of a “fall” of the discipline, sinking into politicized and almost absurd

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¹ S.A. Tokarev, “Rannie etapy razvitiia sovetskoi etnograficheskoi nauki” [Early periods of the development of Soviet ethnographic science], *Ocherki istorii rossiiskoi etnografii, fol’kloristiki i antropologii*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Izdatel’svo AN SSSR, 1971), 111–120.

² Yuri Slezkine, “The Fall of Soviet Ethnography, 1928–1938,” *Current Anthropology* 32, no. 4 (1991): 476–484.

debates under the ideological pressure of Marxist newcomers. Francine Hirsch points out that “archival sources tell a more complicated story.” She argues that what happened “is not the fall but rather invention of ‘Soviet’ ethnography.”³

Ethnography as a scholarly discipline did not perish in the 1930s. Expeditions and museum and research activities continued under those harsh circumstances. Marxism brought new theoretical agendas, research approaches, and intellectual and moral problems that the new generation of ethnographers would now try to tackle. Moreover, they were determined to serve the Soviet regime and the interests of the peoples they studied, assuming that these interests coincided. The picture is more complicated also in the sense that Marxists and those known as “Marrists” did not constitute a consolidated group. Not all Marxists shared enthusiasm for academician Nikolai Marr’s theories; nor did all “Marrists” use Marxist categories of socioeconomic analysis. A minority of both completely agreed to the critique of ethnology with the ensuing call for abandoning it that came from radicals. In the following, I will try to provide a kind of more personalized, “insider” account of the development of Soviet Marxist ethnography. I will try to assume the perspective of ethnographers themselves, and not that of a grand narrative that tends to remain oblivious to people’s motives, their intellectual and moral aspirations, and the predicaments they encountered. I will concentrate on the works and lives of a number of outstanding representatives of Marxist ethnography and analyze some episodes in their careers that seem typical and telling for the Great Break period and beyond. All these people are of the same generation that came into the profession around the late 1920s. I will try to show how this generation converted to Marxism and used it in their research, what results it yielded, and how it was subsequently transformed or arguably put to rest long before its “official” dismissal after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The “Great Break” in Soviet Ethnography Revisited

Historians of ethnography have rightly argued that there were few, if any, Marxist ethnographers in the 1920s or earlier. Marxism penetrated the field from neighboring spheres of intellectual production, and by the end

³ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

of the 1920s it loomed large upon this recently institutionalized scholarly discipline. We can discern two origins of this penetration: a new brand of sociological history, often called “the history of the development of societal forms,” that flourished in communist universities established by the Bolsheviks, and Marr’s increasingly influential linguistic “Japhetic theory,” which grew more and more Marxist in its parlance and attracted an increasing number of followers in related areas of inquiry. Both intellectual developments were clearly supported by the regime, and both contributed to the process and the outcome of Marxist transformation of Soviet ethnography.

As early as 1919, the faculties of law and history in Moscow and Petrograd universities were replaced by faculties of social sciences. Simultaneously the Bolsheviks established new, “ideologically correct” universities, the first of which—the Sverdlov Communist University—opened in 1918. That was one of the measures to implement a rather tough and consistent policy of “conquering the universities,” alongside preferences to proletarian students, denial of universities’ autonomy, recruiting Marxist lecturers, and introducing obligatory Marxist courses such as “the history of socialism,” “the history of proletarian revolution,” and “the history of societal forms.” The latter was taught not only at universities (where it became obligatory in 1924) but at schools as well (under the name of *obshchestvoznanie*—roughly, social science), where it replaced history. Unlike “traditional” history, it dealt not with events or people(s) but “illustrated the general process of development and change of formations.”⁴ By “societal forms” this course meant different forms of economy, family, political organization, and so on, and it traced their development across “sociological eras.” The most widespread textbook, Pavel Kushner’s *An Outline of the Development of Societal Forms*, described four of them: primitive, clan, and feudal societies, and the society of trade capital. Kushner, who taught at the Communist University, saw his book as a treatise in what he called “genetic sociology,” whose task was “to record recurrence and regularity in social phenomena, to generalize customs of different countries.”⁵ One of the central dogmas of Kushner’s genetic sociology was the concept of the linear development of all human societies: “Despite various geographical conditions, despite the very

⁴ A.I. Gukovskii, “Kak ia stal istorikom” [How I became a historian], *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 6 (1965): 76–99.

⁵ “Diskussiiia o marksistskom ponimanii sotsiologii” [Discussion on the Marxist interpretation of sociology], *Istoriik-marksist* 12 (1929): 189–213.

different speed, with which peoples move along the road of culture, all of them travel the same road, passing the same stages of social development.”⁶ However, Kushner acknowledged the conventionality of his sociological stages and the possibility of their simultaneous co-existence in one society, as well as of skipping over a stage or regressing into a previous one. His textbook was reissued seven times between 1924 and 1929 and undoubtedly became a significant landmark in the teaching and perception of history and social sciences in the 1920s.

The other precondition of Soviet ethnography’s “great leap” to Marxism was the rather odd uniting of Marr’s theory and politics with Marxism and Bolshevism. Before the 1920s Marr showed no interest in Marxism or leftism in general. His ideology developed from Georgian nationalism (he was born to a quite extravagant family of a sixty-year-old Scot and a young Georgian peasant woman) to pan-Caucasian nationalism. The dean of the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg/Leningrad University, academician, the head of the Academy of the History of Material Culture (GAIMK) and a number of other scholarly institutes, and the only member of the pre-revolutionary Academy to become a member of the Bolshevik Party (in 1930), he obtained a special combination of scholarly and personal authority and administrative power.

The development of Marr’s linguistic theory went through three major stages⁷. The first one, from his initial 1888 publication to around 1917, can be called Caucasian; this stage saw the definition of a distinct Japhetic family, which consisted of the Georgian language and minor Caucasian languages, as well as Elamite and other extinct languages. In the turbulent revolutionary years, unable to work in the Caucasus, he incorporated into this family the Basque language and little-known languages of early inhabitants of the Mediterranean. The turning point in his thinking and the beginning of the third stage, which saw the transformation of the Japhetic theory into the “new teaching about language,” was the 1923 publication of a two-page article called “The Indo-European Languages of the Mediterranean.” In it he denied the existence of “racially distinct” language

⁶ P.I. Kushner (Knyshev), *Istoriia razvitiia obshchestvennykh form* [The history of the development of social forms] (Moscow, 1928), 157.

⁷ Yuri Slezkine, “N.Ya. Marr and the National Origin of Soviet Ethnogenetics,” *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (1996): 826–862. See also a very interesting and convincing interpretation of Marr and his colleague orientalist as precursors of E. Said and postcolonial attitudes to scholarship in Vera Tolz, *Russia’s Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

families and proposed to see them as consequent stages in what was basically one united process of the development of language.

Marr was a scholar with the broadest possible scope of interests in the history of culture and archaeology. His linguistic conclusions had serious implications for the whole field of sciences of culture. Since languages differ not because of their ethnic origins but because they appear at different stages in the development of language as unitary process, the same applies to cultures: "[...] there are no ethnic cultures, distinct in their origins, but the human culture of certain stages of development [...] all its variations are derivatives of the unitary process of creation on different stages of its development."⁸ Because this process was conditioned by social and material factors (for example, the emergence of the Indo-European languages, in Marr's hypothesis, was conditioned by the introduction of metallurgy), the whole construction assumed an increasingly "sociological" and Marxist look. In 1930 he stated that Japhetic theory completely merged with Marxism, becoming an integral part of it that dealt mainly with prehistoric eras using its paleontological linguistic method.⁹

Marr was deeply imperialistic in his desire to subject archaeology and ethnography to his project, but it was his followers who pushed this tendency to extremes. It should be noted that they never constituted a coherent or united group. Rather schematically, they can be divided into two categories: those scholars of various specializations and generations who really tried to apply the new theory in their research, and those ideologists who did not conduct any research but promoted Marr and Marxism (and themselves) into the position of dogmatic unquestioned authority. One of the latter, V. Aptekar' was to lead the campaign against ethnology as "bourgeois surrogate science." Aptekar', perhaps the most notorious figure in the history of Soviet ethnography, was a typical representative of young Party members who sought promotion during Stalin's "Great Break." Born in Ukraine in 1899, he joined the Party in 1919 and fought in the Civil War. Then he was sent to Moscow, where, though lacking a higher education degree, he taught historical materialism and the history of the Russian Communist Party (RCP[b]) and of class struggle. In 1926 he met Marr and was very impressed with the Japhetic theory. Soon he became Marr's assistant, the member of a number of scholarly organizations, and

⁸ N. Ia. Marr, *Izbrannye raboty* [Selected works], vol. 1 (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo GAIMK, 1933), 236.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 268.

taught courses on the methodology of linguistics and the critique of bourgeois theories in ethnography and anthropology. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Marr's sharp drift toward Marxism itself can be at least partially attributed to Aptekar's influence.

Crucial to Aptekar's thinking was the idea that "sociological" and "ethnological" approaches in the social sciences were incompatible. As early as April 1927, he gave a talk on "Japhetic theory and historical materialism" at the sociological section of the Society of Marxist Historians, in which he claimed that Marr, after his famous 1923 statement on the Indo-European languages, "was done" with ethnological thinking and harmonized linguistics with sociology, that is, historical materialism. In 1928 and 1929, Aptekar elaborated his arguments and presented them to ethnographers. He criticized two principal concepts that lay at the core of ethnological theories: culture and *ethnos*. Both of them are reified by ethnologists and turned into "supernatural substances" that have their own "driving forces," independent of people or society, which are and should be the only objects of social science: "Culture is provided with mysterious inherent forces of development that makes it independent from people." "Dividing humanity and the culture it made into a number of *ethnoses*-cultures, ethnologists either ascribe to them everlasting qualities of impermeability and permanency [...] or give them bio-, chemical, and physical properties [...]." Marxist sociology "solves the main task of ethnology," turning studies of "ethnic cultures" into "the sociological study of individual societies definite in time and space."¹⁰

The protocols of a number of conferences and meetings that took place in 1927–1929 show that ethnographers had an ambivalent attitude to Aptekar's arguments. Almost none of them, of course, endorsed his call to abolish ethnography as a discipline. The sharpest response to Aptekar's talk on "Marxism and Ethnology," given at the Congress of Ethnographers of Leningrad and Moscow in April 1929, was voiced by the younger generation of Marxists, such as the head of IPIN (Institute for the Study of the Peoples of the USSR), N.M. Matorin, and Moscow ethnographer Sergei Tolstov. Tolstov said that Aptekar was never mistaken because he did nothing, and assured the audience: "We will build Marxist ethnology despite you [addressing Aptekar] and all the ultra-left and ultra-right."¹¹

¹⁰ Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk [Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, henceforth ARAN] 350/2/233/3–4.

¹¹ Arkhiv Muzeia Antropologii i Etnografii (*Kunstkamera*) [Archive of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, henceforth AMAE] K–1/3/7/189.

The resolution of the 1929 Congress stated that Soviet ethnography joined the Party in its work on “turning the NEP Russia into the socialist one” and hence set as the most urgent goal the introduction of Marxism in the practice of ethnography. Partly embracing Aptekar’s thesis, the Congress envisioned Soviet ethnography as “the study of concrete societies, mainly those at the earlier stages of development, which means that the main object of ethnographic research must become socioeconomic formations in their concrete variations.”¹²

We need not follow all the twists and turns of the debates about the subject matter of ethnography, because the decisive words about it were already said above: the discipline embraced historical materialism as the only acceptable theory and serving the Party’s national policy (Terry Martin’s “affirmative action”) as its main public mission. Matorin coined a slogan, “from classics [i.e., classical evolutionists] to Marxism,” but he had to abandon it after the infamous Archaeological and Ethnographic Congress in May 1932 at Marr’s Academy of the History of Material Culture, where ethnography (as well as archaeology) was permitted only the role of a “supplementary” historical discipline concerned with collecting field materials, which would be interpreted within the only real science—Marxist historiography. One of the reasons for this decision was the idea that ethnology was a colonial product made to differentiate “peoples without history” from historical nations. In the anti-colonial proletarian state, historiography was to encompass all peoples and “give” them their historical narratives. Archaeologists and ethnographers turned into “historians of pre-capitalist formations” and were given the following research topics: “The process of ethnogenesis and settlement of peoples, material production in its variations, origins of family, classes and religion, forms of ‘decay’ of primitive communism and feudal societies in capitalist surroundings, form of transformation of pre-capitalist society into a socialist one escaping capitalism, construction of culture ‘national in form, socialist in content.’”¹³

Again, it is impossible to do justice here to the real variety of opinions ethnographers had about Marxism at that time, partly because it was not safe to raise dissenting voices, and partly because of the lack of evidence.

¹² “Soveshchanie etnografov Leningrada i Moskvyy” [The conference of ethnographers of Leningrad and Moscow], *Etnografiia* 2 (1929): 110–144, here 118.

¹³ “Resoliutsiia Vserossiiskogo Arkheologo-etnograficheskogo soveshchaniia 7–11 maia 1932 goda” [The resolution of the All-Russia Archaeological and Ethnographic Conference of May 7–11, 1932], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 3 (1932): 4–14, here 14.

Nevertheless, there were differences in the interpretation of Marxism and the theoretical implication it had for ethnography. The dean of the Ethnological Faculty of Moscow University, Petr Preobrazhenskii, did not object to Marxism as such, but at the 1929 Congress he offered two principal ideas. First, he said, ethnology should give up evolutionism and radically “historicize” itself, that is, view each culture as a historical entity in its own right and not as a stage on the evolutionary ladder. Second, this “historicization” had to begin with a careful delineation of “technical-economic areas” (his version of Graebner’s cultural areas).¹⁴ The main authority among Leningrad ethnographers, Vladimir Bogoraz, seconded his colleague and said that these areas should be studied as interconnected in all their environmental, technical, material, and ideological elements.¹⁵ Later he offered his version of the theoretical application of Marxism, which contained numerous attempts to causally correlate early forms of economy with social and ideological elements of their superstructures. He implied that what set primitive economies apart was their more direct influence on ideology, mythology, and customs than in more developed formations. Another task for a Marxist ethnographer, according to Bogoraz, was to analyze social stratification and exploitation within peoples under study: “Primitive tribes [...] until very recently have been described as some solid social bodies painted in the same classless color.”¹⁶

Younger ethnographers, who adhered to Marxism less opportunistically and perhaps more sincerely, had a somewhat different vision of its relation to ethnography. Given that they were students or young professionals, they almost unanimously rejected Aptekar’s call for the “abolition” of their “science.” What they shared with Aptekar was a deep distrust for such categories as *ethnos* and culture. One of them maintained that history should not be narrated the way it had been previously, “as a variety of *ethnoses*, each of which is qualitatively distinctive, and this distinctiveness is in the soul of this *ethnos*, in its psyche, and it does not matter at all if it boils down to race or culture. In this respect culture is nothing else than the same old [category of] race in disguise.”¹⁷ Sergei Tokarev argued that Marxist ethnography was not premised on the pri-

¹⁴ AMAE. K-1/3/7/9-20.

¹⁵ AMAE. K-1/3/7/38.

¹⁶ V.G. Tan-Bogoraz, “K voprosu o primenenii marksistskogo metoda k izucheniiu etnograficheskikh iavlenii” [Toward applying Marxism to the study of ethnographic phenomena], *Etnografiia* 1-2 (1930): 3-56, here 15.

¹⁷ ARAN. 377/1/130/36.

macy of culture; he saw it as a product of social development. Since the division between historical and non-historical peoples could not be sustained, ethnography would soon merge with history, so there would be Africanists, Americanists, and so on, instead of historians and ethnographers.¹⁸ Mark Kosven stressed that the name of the discipline was far less important than its content, and ethnography should be sociological (since its subject was society) and historical (since it studied society in development). The term “genetic sociology,” that is, the sociology of pre-class society, would also do. Pavel Kushner agreed with this vision of sociology as the generalizing “parent science” for ethnography, which “can be called ethnology, ethnography, sociology [...] or a science of living history of humankind, that is, of the contemporary humankind that has not reached the stage of capitalism.”¹⁹

With all their anti-colonial rhetoric and critique of concepts of “bourgeois science,” Marxist ethnographers—and it cannot be overestimated—were anything but nominalists. When they talked about “concrete” studies of “concrete” societies, their concreteness was no less embedded in the abstractness of Marx’s formations and Lenin’s socioeconomic setups. “The doctrine of setups and formations is extremely important and fruitful for the theoretical and practical work of ethnographers,” said Matorin, the spokesman for Marxist ethnography. “Only in its light it is possible to answer, at last, the question of subject matter and method of ethnography.”²⁰ Moreover, the abstractness of this formula was pushed to its limits. Here ethnographers’ subjugation to history, however benevolent the reasons for it, backfired on them.

In the early 1930s Marr’s GAIMK was, in A.A. Formozov’s words, the center of historical thought.²¹ The first part of the decade witnessed a brainstorm, during which GAIMK’s historians and archaeologists (led by new Marxist theoreticians, such as Abram Prigozhin and Sergei Bykovskii, but with the help of “the old professionals”) finally established “the five-part scheme” of human history (known as *piatichlenka*). It started with the “primitive-communal” formation (although Marx and Engels never used this term), whose main characteristics were common production, common

¹⁸ AMAE. K-1/3/7/186-187.

¹⁹ ARAN. 350/2/233/37.

²⁰ N.M. Matorin, “Sovremennyi etap i zadachi sovetskoi etnografii” [The modern period and tasks of Soviet ethnography], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 1-2 (1931): 3-38, here 19.

²¹ A.A. Formozov, *Russkie arkheologi v epokhu totalitarizma* [Russian archaeologists in the totalitarian era] (Moscow: Znak, 2004).

property, and common consumption. This “formation” was established as a dogma, and some explicitly Marxist ethnographers found themselves under severe attack for their unwillingness to accept the idea of primitive communism. All in all, enthusiastic Marxist ethnographers exchanged one set of abstract concepts for another and set out towards the new dilemmas and predicaments that resulted.

Predicament of “Formation”

In order to understand Soviet Marxist ethnography and its practitioners, it is crucial to look not only at their theoretical positions and opinions about the subject matter of the discipline, but at their research practices and works they wrote.²² Observing the development of their discipline, Soviet ethnographers always underlined close connections between “the practice of construction of socialism” (i.e., collectivization) and their works in the 1930s. They claimed that their work had a clear task “to help local Party officials to understand complicated social relations among certain peoples,”²³ so—fully in accordance with the Marxist ideal—the task was not just about explaining the world but about changing it. But can we take at face value this concept of ethnographic expertise without an attempt to look at the complex power-knowledge relationships that this role entailed?

In order to clarify, or perhaps instead to complicate, the above simplistic description, I will turn again to Pavel Kushner’s work. He was quite an exceptional person among ethnographers. A member of the Bolshevik Party since 1905, he was an active participant in the October Revolution. From 1917 to 1921, Kushner occupied high posts in the Party hierarchy, including those of chairman of the Tashkent Party Committee and member of the Turkestan Central Committee. In 1921 he switched over to teaching at Sverdlov Communist University, where he headed the History of Societal Forms Department. In 1925 he made a brief summer expedition to northern Kirgizia, and he later published a book called *Gornaia Kirgiziia* (Highland Kirgizia), which was usually listed first among monographs typical of 1930s Soviet ethnography. Detailed archival research

²² For an overview of the relations between anthropology and Marxism in international context see: Maurice Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology: The History of a Relationship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

²³ S.A. Tokarev, “Sovetskaia etnografiia za 40 let” [Forty years of Soviet ethnography], *Vestnik istorii mirovoi kul’tury* 2 (1958): 78–98, here 85.

reveals an extremely complicated social and political context, which left its mark on the character and conclusions of Kushner's study.²⁴

Right after returning from the field, Kushner delivered a report at the Central Asia Bureau of the Central Committee in which he concentrated on the predominantly cattle-breeding economy of the Kyrgyz and social differentiation among them. He had collected budgets of different types of households and gave the percentage of rich, middle-income and poor households, as well as dependent workers without any property. But when it came to the central theme of Marxist analysis, class differentiation, and exploitation, he made his point very clearly: "I was carefully looking for class struggle and social classes, according to the exact concept of class, but I did not find them." Even the dependent poor, who work for the rich, think of themselves as their "younger brothers," and clan solidarity far exceeds class solidarity. But it was not primitive clan organization, since the real economic and judicial power was in the hands of *manapy* (rich cattle-owners), who exploited their kin under the guise of help, "feeding," and leasing relations. Kushner's recommendation to the authorities was well in accordance with the NEP policy: to give credits to the poor, to make the rich sell cattle instead of leasing it to the poor. That would slowly destroy the natural economy on which the power of the *manapy* rested and would lead to economic independence for the poor.

At first Kushner's analysis and recommendations were received positively by local authorities, but in 1926 the commission from the center detected "theoretical muddle" among Kyrgyz communists. There were two factions; one claimed that the Kyrgyz lived in clan society and did not have social stratification, the other that class differentiation had already reached the level when it was time to declare "the dictatorship of farm laborers" and dispossess the *manapy*. A member of this commission critiqued Kushner's opinions in the Party's main theoretical journal, *Bolshevik*. The author stated that the fact that *manapy* were not survivals of a clan society, as Kushner claimed, could be proved on the basis of Kushner's own materials—*manapy* owned the land, had dependent servants, and exercised administration and justice just like real feudal lords, which in fact they were: forms of clan relations based on kinship had long ago been filled with feudal content. Class-based feudal socioeconomic reality among the Kyrgyz was masked by surviving forms of clan kinship

²⁴ See more on this in S. Alymov, *P.I. Kushner i razvitie sovetskoi etnografii v 1920–1950-e gody* [P.I. Kushner and the development of Soviet ethnography from the 1920s to the 1950s] (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii, 2006), 91–124.

relations. In May 1926 the Central Committee passed a resolution that ordered the Kyrgyz communists to concentrate on the struggle against *manapy*. The eviction of the richest of them started in 1927. Meanwhile the campaign against Kushner in the Party press continued, and in 1928 he was again accused of adhering to the theory of “capitalist ripening of the *aul*”²⁵ and denial of Lenin’s policy of pursuing socialism while bypassing the capitalist stage.

Published in 1929, Kushner’s book *Gornaia Kirgiziia* had a subtitle, “sociological reconnaissance,” that precisely characterized its content. Its stated purpose was the “understanding of a social order that existed there,” which Kushner called *manapstvo*. He focused on the economy of the Kyrgyz cattle-breeders and their social relationships, and at the center of both there was a figure of a *manap*, “a powerful master of Kyrgyz life.” As a supplement he gave a picturesque description of a potlatch-like feast (*toy*) held by a *manap* called Kerim-bay. Kushner described the host in a way that could evoke only disgust and indignation in the reader. As in 1925, he analyzed budgets, methods of subsistence of different households, and differentiation among them, but apparently his conclusions differed substantively from the previous ones. Thus, in sharp contrast to his recent confession that he “had not found classes,” now he was sure that “in the Kirgiz *aul* of the highlands, social classes were fully formed. Rich cattle-owners stand as the class of exploiters, using social survivals in the Kyrgyz *aul* as one of the methods of gaining the biggest economic effect from exploitation. The poor, in turn forced to become dependent *urtaki* [workers renting cattle and land and unable to have an independent household], cannot oppose this exploitation because the same survivals obscure their understanding of the real facts of life.” The rent, feasts, and other forms of “feeding” the poor, as well as other privileges such as supervision over clan territories and execution of justice, were instruments of the *manap* that kept this far-from-primitive social order going. Kushner’s verdict was that he had observed a transition between sociological eras, or embryonic feudalism, analogous to the social system of the Greeks of the Homeric era, or of that of the ancient Germans. Thus the Marxist analytical apparatus allowed Kushner to claim to have unveiled the real mechanisms of his informants’ social life hidden from their own eyes.

The same apparatus, though, allowed other Marxists to challenge his conclusions and even accuse him of serious theoretical and political er-

²⁵ *Aul* is a settlement among both former nomad and settled peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

rors. The first to do this were economists P.V. Pogorel'skii and V.S. Batrakov, authors of *The Economy of the Nomadic Aul of Kyrgyzstan* (1930), who did their field research in the same region and almost simultaneously with Kushner. Guided by Lenin's dictum that in social analysis it is sometimes better "to run ahead than to fall behind," they insisted that the Kyrgyz *aul* already had such capitalist characteristics as proletarians, hired workers, and *manapy*-capitalists, working "for the market." Clan traditions existed only as "old men's tales" kept up by the *manapy*. Ethnographers, according to Pogorel'skii and Batrakov, fall behind in their analysis of contemporary life, because they study mainly epic poems and oral "stories" of the nomads, digressing from the modern social and economic situation. Surprisingly, Kushner became the main target of their critique for "not being able to break with the traditions of old ethnography." They said he believed that property stratification was mere "differentiation" and that there were no social classes in the *aul*, and that he developed a theory of the *manapy*'s socially helpful functions. He was also accused of revising the Marxist theory of primitive society because he assumed the possibility of property differences in the clan, a point of view that "perfectly meets the interests of *aul* exploiters." As a result of all these attacks (and, one should add, those on his history-of-societal-forms textbook, as well as on his unwillingness to accept the primitive communism theory), Kushner was forced to give up scholarly work and switch to a career in diplomacy. He was able to return to scholarship only in the 1940s.

As one can see from the episode with Kushner's book *Gornaia Kirgiziia*, it is naive to think of ethnographers as aloof experts who gave the authorities their objective conclusions based exclusively on "facts." Moreover, studying the biographies of the generation of ethnographers who came into the profession in the 1920s and 1930s, one can find similar episodes in their early careers. For example, Leonid Potapov, one of the staunchest proponents of the theory of patriarchal-feudal relations among nomads, was himself criticized for his student article written in the traditions of Shternberg's school. Mark Kosven, later one of the foremost theorists of Soviet ethnography, was fired in 1930 from the Institute of Ethnic and National Cultures of the Soviet East for denying class struggle and not seeing beneath the surface of clan traditions among the Udmurts.²⁶ The list can be continued with many "bourgeois scientists," but the point was that young Marxists were not free from this kind of critique either. Kushner's case, I would argue, shows that at least some Marxist

²⁶ Ibid., 119–121.

ethnographers neither objectively observed their “concrete societies” nor just legitimized the current Party line. They were trying to take part in the great Stalinist modernization project, the path that had serious ethical and epistemological implications for ethnography.

Ethical dilemmas and controversies pertain to the questions that have the most far-reaching consequences for the discipline. Marxist ethnographers took a clearly politicized stand in relation to “their” peoples. One of them, a leading specialist on the Kyrgyz, Saul Abramzon, published a description of his expedition in a local newspaper. Abramzon was a pupil of Shternberg and Bogoraz and a member of the Komsomol since 1920. In 1926 he graduated from Leningrad University and went to Kirgizia; in 1927 he joined the Party. When he visited highlands nomads in 1930, he had a red flag over his tent and an assistant procurator of the republic as a companion, whose mission was “to study on the spot crimes of everyday occurrence.” The main object of Abramzon himself was, of course, *manapstvo*—its social and economic functions, roots, and methods of governing. In a series of newspaper articles published in Kirgizia the same year, he concentrated on the most powerful *manap* of the region, his genealogy and descendants, giving out their names and the places where they worked. He made no secret of his attitude towards some of them, whom he called “the scum of sociological eras left behind.” Back in Leningrad in 1931, he wrote a more academic article, which nevertheless contained a great deal of information on former *manapy* and their children, who tried to “worm themselves into kolkhozes” and organize sabotage.²⁷ The same issue was covered in detail in a 1932 paper by another famous Leningrad ethnographer, a leading Soviet expert on the Altai, Leonid Potapov. He described various methods of sabotage used by the formerly wealthy (who, in the Altai case, were called *zaisany*) in forms of distribution and organization of labor in kolkhozes they still controlled.²⁸

The other important feature of Marxist ethnographers’ ethical stance was their militant anti-colonialism. A good example of the anti-colonial rhetoric deployed by ethnographers in the 1930s can be taken from the first monograph of a leading Soviet expert on the peoples of northern Siberia, Boris Dolgikh. After graduating from Moscow University, he worked in the North in the 1930s as a land surveyor and statistician. In

²⁷ Ibid., 97–99.

²⁸ L.P. Potapov, *Poezdka v kolkhozy Chermal'skogo aimaka Oirotskoi Avtonomnoi Oblasti* [A trip to kolkhozes of Chermal aimak in the Oirot autonomous region] (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo i tipografiia Akademii nauk SSSR, 1932), 40–48.

1955 he became the head of a department of the Institute of Ethnography that then was called the "Sector for Studying Socialist Construction among the Smaller Peoples of the North." In a Malinowski-style introduction to his book *Kety* (1934), he described his first impressions of that "strange long-haired people in multicolored short robes." But his dream of "being not in the depths of Asia, but somewhere on the banks of the Red River in the United States" was interrupted by the sight of a blind old man "mad from his thirst for alcohol"—the result of capitalist exploitation of the natives. Dolgikh defines the Ket as "the most proletarianized people of the North." They were mostly hunters and fishers and were exploited primarily by the Russian kulaks, who bought their catch. The process of Russian colonization is depicted by Dolgikh in the darkest possible tones. He says the Cossacks are "imprudent *Kulturträger*" who robbed and deceived natives and got them in the habit of drinking. He characterizes tsarist rule in Siberia as a "330-year-long gloomy, drunk era."²⁹

Kety was among a number of the first monographs written by the young Marxist ethnographers in the 1930s. Unlike Kushner's book, they were usually based on prolonged, extensive fieldwork and had as their main purpose, as Slezkine observes, the identification of the stage of development of a given society. These stages were conceived in terms of formations (primitive clan society, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism) and Lenin's "setups" (*uklady*: patriarchal natural economy, small commodity production, private-ownership capitalism, state capitalism, socialism). But from the very beginning, this typology (just as, probably, any other one) proved too simplistic and rigid for real societies to fit into.

As early as 1921, Stalin, in his "Next Tasks of the Party in National Question (Thesis and Report for the Tenth Congress of RCP[b])," defined social relations among those peoples who "did not pass through capitalist development [...] and retained mostly a cattle-breeding economy" as "patriarchal-feudal." Leonid Potapov later complained that this definition had not been "rightly understood and used" in the works of ethnographers. He did not exclude his own works from that criticism. In 1933 he published his first monograph, *An Outline of the History of Oirotiia: The Altaians in the Period of Russian Colonization*, which contained both a characteristically harshly critical history of Russian oppression of the Altaians and class analysis of their social relationships. He rebutted the same enemy, "clan theory," which presumed a classless society and a lack of exploitation. He also criticized the old ethnographers' usage of the idea of culture,

²⁹ B.O. Dolgikh, *Kety* [The Kets] (Moscow and Irkutsk: Ogiz, 1934), 20.

which downplayed and obscured the “double exploitation” that the Altaians had been under in Tsarist Russia. The monograph described social relationships among the Altaians as purely feudal, with *bai* almost analogous to feudal lords. They owned most land and cattle and rented it out to those less well off. This practice, called *polysh* (the help), kept the latter in bondage like serfs. Potapov mentioned that long ago, when the Altaians had lived in an actual clan society, it really was a “clan mutual aid,” but now only the form was left; the content was exploitation.³⁰

In his review of Potapov’s work, Sergei Tokarev, another prominent representative of the Marxist generation, pointed out that Potapov analyzed class and property relationships correctly but that his picture was that of “mechanical summation of elements of two formations” that could not explain the persistence of “survivals” of the clan society in the feudal one.³¹ In his own monograph, *Pre-Capitalist Survivals in Oirotiya*, Tokarev set out to do exactly this. The study of survivals of one formation in another is, according to Tokarev, “the most difficult application” of the formation theory, but the most valuable one, because it allows social reality to be shown in all its complexity. His main argument was that former clan elders (*zaisany*) deliberately used clan “survivals,” that is, clan mentality, to exploit their kin, who saw them as defenders of common interests. But the “intricate interweaving of social setups,” as Tokarev put it, was even more complicated since, as the use of money increased, feudal relationships mutated into capitalist ones.³²

Dolgikh’s definition of the structure of the Ket society shows that it could include almost all formations known to Marxists: “In general, the economic and social structure of the reindeer Ket [...] can be characterized as a backward, patriarchal economy of small commodity type with features reflecting the feudal stage skipped by them, with strong development of commercial and industrial elements and weak remnants of clan ‘mutual help’ that serves only to conceal the machinations of exploiters.”³³ This feature of Soviet ethnographers’ definitions of social structure of various societies can be seen in their analysis of certain social institutions. Evgenii Shilling, for example, traced the adjustment of an institu-

³⁰ L.P. Potapov, *Ocherk istorii Oirotii* [An outline of the history of Oirotia] (Novosibirsk: OGIZ, 1933).

³¹ S.A. Tokarev, “Review of: L.P. Potapov. *Ocherk istorii Oirotii*. Novosibirsk. 1933,” *Sovetskaia Etnografiia* 4–5 (1935): 244–246.

³² S.A. Tokarev, *Dokapitalisticheskie perezhitki v Oirotii* [Pre-capitalist survivals in Oirotia] (Leningrad: Sotsekgiz, 1936).

³³ Dolgikh, *Kety*, 126.

tion, called "the meeting of a group of unmarried," a parallel to a men's secret society, in the *aul* of Kubachi in Dagestan to every stage of social development it presumably had gone through. This tradition, according to Shilling, goes back to pre-class society but bears imprints of clan formations (system of rules, typical of clan law in the North Caucasus), feudal formations (courtly rules of behavior), and capital formations (the leading role of the wealthiest).³⁴

Toward the end of the 1930s and in the 1940s, as formational identification became a less pressing political matter, the debates acquired a more academic character. For example, Tokarev in 1940 defended his doctoral dissertation, "Social Structure of the Yakut in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." He rejected the "preconceived scheme" of feudalism, but the only alternative he could put forward was the idea of the predominance of slave-owning. His reviewer, drawing on Tokarev's own material, doubted his interpretation of Russian documents concerning the Yakut and called on him "to be more definite about Yakut feudalism," but Tokarev replied that, according to Engels, a clan society transforms into a slave-owning one. That this was not the case with Western Europe was due to the influence of the Roman Empire. The Yakut were proceeding to a class society without external interference; hence they were moving towards slave-owning but turned to feudalism because of Russian colonization.³⁵

Tokarev's doctoral dissertation was published in 1945, and it reflects some changes in Soviet ethnography or even the beginning of a new period. The Marxist formation paradigm was firmly established, but as one can see from the above review of its application, it showed weaknesses as well as strengths. Of course, Marxism, with its inherent bias to conflict, drew scholars' attention to matters of property and class relations. The fact that all complexities of their analysis boiled down to "formation diagnosis" should not obscure its quite elaborate character. As is often the case, the methods of critique were perhaps more valuable than the results they yielded. Soviet Marxists themselves could only reach contradictory and sometimes plainly meaningless conclusions of finding features and survivals of all possible formations in an analyzed

³⁴ E.M. Shilling, *Kubachintsy i ikh kul'tura* [The Kubachi and their culture] (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1949), 170–173.

³⁵ S.A. Tokarev, "Eshche raz o kharaktere obshchestvennogo stroia iakutov v XVII veke" [One more time about the character of social organization of the Yakuts in the seventeenth century], *Sovetskaia Etnografiia* 1 (1947): 216–218.

society. The assumption that all societies go through the same stages of development and that there are no “pure” formations saved the situation, but already in the 1940s one can see a definite decline of interest in such “sociological” matters.

The historical nature of ethnography was proclaimed in the late 1920s, but throughout the 1930s ethnographers did not usually go earlier than the period of Russian colonization. Their main intention was to accuse the tsarist regime of various abuses and exploitation of “the natives.” The anti-colonial rhetoric, though, did not lead to acquiring “the native point of view” or a critique of Western categories, as in later post-colonial thought. The predominant theme was the demystification of natives’ false consciousness, which was studied only to prove its inadequacy and inability to grasp exploiters’ tricks. From the 1940s on, ethnographers tended to go deeper in history, trying to reconstruct the pre-colonial past. At the same time, there was a focus on the new socialist present, which could be described only within the narrow limits of socialist-realist assumptions. Both these developments can be identified as Marxist only in the broadest meaning of the term.

“Ethnographic Past” and Its Survivals

The tendency to deepen the historical breadth of ethnography already existed in the 1930s but became evident in the 1940s. In 1946 Sergei Tolstov, one of the most active Marxists in the 1930s and now the head of the Institute of Ethnography, defined his “science” as “a branch of history, studying cultural features [*osobennosti*] of various peoples of the world in their historical development, problems of origins, and cultural and historical relationships of these peoples, reconstructing the history of their dispersion and relocations”—the definition he would have probably considered rather “bourgeois” some fifteen years earlier.³⁶ Tokarev, in his lectures, delivered at Moscow University from 1939 and finally published in 1958, broadly defined ethnography as “a study of peoples’ ways of life [*byt*]” and subtitled the book “Historical Foundations of *Byt* and Culture.” The debates about the scope and subject matter of ethnography among Soviet scholars, he noted rather vaguely, “brought more harm than good” because they diverted their attention from research to “abstract reason-

³⁶ S.P. Tolstov, “Etnografiia i sovremennost’” [Ethnography and modern life], *Sovetskaia Etnografiia* 1 (1946): 3–11, here 3.

ing.”³⁷ This critique echoed the much more vehement one mounted by archaeologists and ethnographers (including Tolstov) in 1937 and aimed at Aptekar’, Bykovskii, and other “GAIMK theorists” shot as “enemies of the people.” It was they who had created “the atmosphere of constant useless discussions” and replaced archaeology and ethnography with “sociological jabber.”

Among the factors that facilitated the historicism of ethnography were the influence of Marr’s interdisciplinary project and the fact that many ethnographers (including Potapov, Tolstov, and Tokarev) worked at GAIMK in the 1930s. Moreover, repression and political accusations forced a number of them to switch to archaeology, which was a safer profession. Thus, Tolstov, head of the Institute of Ethnography from 1942 to 1965 worked mainly as an archaeologist since the end of the 1930s.³⁸ Marxists who, by the end of the 1940s, had become key figures in the discipline continued their projects of supplying peoples with histories and explored wider chronological ranges. Thus Potapov’s monumental *An Outline of the History of the Altaians* (1950) was an example of an approach jokingly referred to as “from Paleolith to Glavlit,” that is, from the earliest archaeological findings on the territory (the new part that did not appear in his earlier publications) to the “socialist culture” of modern times. Russian colonization and exploitation of the indigenous population was still a big part of the picture (as well as social structure), but it was now conceived as a “lesser evil,” a progressive alternative to Chinese occupation.³⁹

Boris Dolgikh, like Tokarev, embarked on an archival project that was to become his magnum opus, *The Clan and Tribal Structure of the Peoples of Siberia in the Seventeenth Century* (1960). The idea was to “link” ethnography with history by preparing a list and a map of all indigenous groups mentioned in Russian sources and tracing their continuity up through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dolgikh was not quite sure whether clans and tribes (in Morgan and Engels’s definitions) really existed and preferred to follow the grouping given in the sources. He

³⁷ S.A. Tokarev, *Etnografiia narodov SSSR* [Ethnography of the peoples of the USSR] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1958), 7.

³⁸ S.S. Alymov, “Na puti k ‘drevnei istorii narodov SSSR’: maloizvestnye stranitsy nauchnoi biografii S.P. Tolstova” [On the way to “the ancient history of the peoples of the USSR.” Littleknown aspects of the academic biography of S.P. Tolstov], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 5 (2007): 125–144.

³⁹ L.P. Potapov, *Ocherki po istorii altaitsev* [Essays on the history of the Altaians] (Novosibirsk: Novosibgiz, 1948).

touched upon the social structure of Siberian peoples of those times only occasionally.⁴⁰ Pavel Kushner's major work *Ethnic Territories and Ethnic Boundaries* (1951) stemmed from the wartime project of ethnic mapping of territories under military control, which had employed a number of Moscow ethnographers from 1943 until the end of the war. The emphasis was on ethnic boundaries and disputed territories like the one that became his case study, the western Lithuanian border. Despite its rather "applied" character, this work raised many issues of ethnic identification and history that would come to the fore in later Soviet ethnography. Saul Abramzon completed his major monograph only in 1971. Its title, *The Kyrgyz and their Ethnogenetic, Historical, and Cultural Ties*, well reflects the historical orientation of late-Soviet ethnography and its predominant interest in ethnogenesis. Sergei Tolstov completed his archaeological opus magnum "Ancient Khoresm" (1948), followed by a number of books and articles based on the excavations of his Khorezm archaeological and ethnographical expedition. In his final theoretical statement this leader of the "Soviet school in ethnography" stressed the importance of the "absolute chronology" for studying such social institutes as clan and family, claimed that Soviet ethnographers managed to "reconstruct in general outline the history of primitive humanity," and that social and cultural diversity can be explained only as a result of different levels and conditions of development, and not by some "racial" or inherently "cultural" factors.⁴¹

The prerevolutionary period of the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century gradually but firmly established itself as the Soviet "ethnographic past." It would be misleading, though, to conclude that contemporary life completely slipped out of ethnographers' view. At the end of the 1940s, the authorities severely criticized the social sciences. One of the main complaints was the lack of relevant contemporary research that could be helpful for socialist construction. Strong pressure was put on ethnographers to write about kolkhozes and modern "socialist culture." In the early 1950s Abramzon, Kushner, and Nikolai Kisliakov led teams of fieldworkers who prepared what were known as "kolkhoz monographs"—books devoted to the history and current situation of one par-

⁴⁰ B.O. Dolgikh, *Rodovoi i plemennoi sostav narodov Sibiri v XVII veke* [Clan and tribal composition of the peoples in seventeenth-century Siberia] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1960).

⁴¹ S.P. Tolstov, "Nekotorye problemy vseмирnoi istorii v svete dannykh sovremennoi istoricheskoi etnografii" [Some problems of the world history in the light of modern historical ethnography], *Voprosy istorii* 11 (1961): 107–118.

ticular village or kolkhoz. In 1955 the Institute of Ethnography created the Sector for Studying Socialist Construction among Small Nations of the North with Dolgikh as its head, which worked in close contact with the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR.

Writing about the present was not an easy undertaking in the USSR. Already at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934, Stalin announced that out of five Lenin's social "setups," patriarchal, private, and state capitalisms had been annihilated, small commodity production sidelined, and socialism had become overwhelmingly dominant. Still earlier, in 1932, at the Seventeenth Conference the Party proclaimed as its main political objectives for the next five years the final annihilation of classes, causes of class stratification and exploitation, and "survivals of capitalism in economy and in people's minds." Ethnographers were now facing not a turmoil of collectivization, which they had tried to document at the beginning of the 1930s,⁴² but a more or less stable social and political order. Consequently, ethnographers and other social scientists developed their own discourse in which all phenomena were divided into "positive" and "negative." The "positive" phenomena were attributed to socialism and properly described; the "negative" phenomena were in most cases only vaguely mentioned, and their very existence was usually explained as the lag of "consciousness" behind "being." The primacy of being before consciousness was, of course, a completely Marxist concept, but its use in explaining away everything that did not fit into the "socialist way of life" was questioned by some philosophers even in the 1950s. Ethnographers also tried to offer more plausible reasons for the persistence of some survivals, mainly religion, which would locate their roots in the contemporary but would still retain many traditional features, such as the social structure of a Central Asia *aul*.⁴³

The practice of the Sector for Studying Socialist Construction among Small Nations of the North demonstrates how ethnographers processed their field findings into "open" ones, fit for publication, and "closed," suitable only for internal memorandums to state officials. It was clear to them that "negative" information, such as the poor economic, social, and cultural conditions of northern kolkhozes, alcoholism, poor health, and "de-qualification," could not appear in print and could be brought to

⁴² *Trud i byt v kolkhozakh* [Labor and life in kolkhozes] (Leningrad, 1931).

⁴³ G.P. Snesarev, "O nekotorykh prichinakh sokhraneniia religiozno-bytovykh perezhitkov u uzbekov Khorezma" [About some causes of persistence of religious and everyday life survivals among the Uzbek of Khorezm], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 2 (1957): 60–72.

official (but not to public) consideration only in this form. In their memorandums, ethnographers sharply criticized local officials and their policies, questioning the stereotyped notion of survivals. Thus V. Tugolukov asserted that, contrary to the local officials' "theory" that alcoholism among the Evenkis was "a legacy of the past," it was in fact the result of their poor material conditions and the policy of local trading organizations.⁴⁴ My own "revisiting" of the village of Viriatino studied by Kushner's team in the 1950s, as well as archival research, show that omissions and misinterpretations inevitably accompanied the choice of the village for fieldwork, as well as the writing and editing of the monograph.⁴⁵ In the 1970s Abramzon was severely criticized in the Kyrgyz Party press for describing "tribal survivals" in his monograph, and he decided to break relations with the republic whose study he had devoted his entire life to.⁴⁶ So a relatively unbiased and critical ethnographic study of the real mechanisms of functioning of such institutions as the kolkhoz or the factory was impossible, and this contributed to the decline in Soviet ethnography of such an inherently critical theory as Marxism.

The statement that Marxism in Soviet ethnography had evaporated long before the collapse of the Soviet Union can be doubted on many grounds. Scholars continued to talk about formations and frequently quoted Marx, Engels, and Morgan. Morgan and Engels's dogmas concerning clan and kinship continued to dominate the Soviet theory of "primitive society." Some, on the other hand, would say that real Marxism never took hold in Russian ethnography, and what it had was a mix of old-fashioned evolutionism and dogmatized "Engelsism." I doubt that an exact test identifying real Marxists is feasible or needed, but sheer reliance on the official loyalty of ethnographers to Marxism in the Soviet Union also would not be a fruitful approach. The impression that Marxism in ethnography (and probably in Soviet social sciences in general) had lost its momentum as early as the 1960s does not contradict the existence of some true believers or ongoing debates on the primacy of clan or commune as the principal economic unit of the "primitive society." The shift of interests of ethnographers from the first (and arguably the last) Marxist

⁴⁴ *Etnologicheskaya ekspertiza. Narody Severa Rossii. 1956–1958*. [Ethnological expertise. The peoples of the north of Russia, 1956–1958], eds. Z.P. Sokolova and E.A. Pivneva (Moscow: IEA RAN, 2004), 86–88.

⁴⁵ S. Alymov, "On the Soviet Ethnography of the Soviet Life: The Case of the 'Village of Viriatino,'" *Histories of Anthropology Annual* 7 (2011): 23–48.

⁴⁶ S.T. Tabyshev, "Neutomimyi issledovatel," in *Kirgizy i ikh etnogeneticheskie i etnokul'turnye svyazi*, ed. S.M. Abramzon (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1990), 9–16.

generation in the Soviet Union signaled the direction in which the discipline continued under the lead of the next head of the Institute of Ethnography, Yulian Bromley, who officially proclaimed *ethnos* as the subject matter of ethnography, leaving all “sociological” (or social) matters to sociologists.

Ethnogenesis and Historiography: Historical Narratives for Central Asia in the 1940s and 1950s¹

Sergey Abashin

In 1947, at the climax of Stalinist rule, the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR in Tashkent published the second volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*.² Of this three volumes planned for this work, the second volume was published earliest. The editor of the second volume was the renowned historian Sergei Bakhrushin, then a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union (AN SSSR), head of the Department of Soviet History at the Historical Institute for the Period of Feudalism, and laureate of the Stalin State Prize. The author of the second volume was the corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR Aleksandr Semenov.

Only in 1950 was the first volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* published. Its editor-in-chief, Sergei Tolstov, headed the Institute of Ethnography, while its main author was the corresponding member of the AN SSSR Aleksandr Iakubovskii. This volume was introduced by a short preface from the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, explaining that the previously published second volume was “the very first attempt” to produce “a major work” about “the origins (*o dalekom proshlom*) of the peoples of the USSR.” This, however, “could not help but affect the volume’s quality,” and, as could be read there, it actually turned out to be “not without a

¹ I want to express my gratitude to S. Alymov and S. Sokolovskii as well as to R. Cvetkovski and A. Hofmeister for their helpful comments on this essay. I also wish to thank A. Il’khamov, with whom I discussed the subject of this article, and V. Germanov, who directed my attention to a number of useful sources.

² *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana* [History of the peoples of Uzbekistan], vol. 2 (Tashkent: Izdatel’sтво AN UzSSR, 1947).

number of serious deficiencies.” The text added that “further deepening exploration of Uzbekistan’s historical past, collective work, bold as well as open Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism, high standards, and irreconcilability towards the slightest aberration from the principles of Marxism-Leninism in science will enable the historiographers of the republic to solve the great task imposed on them to build the real Marxist-Leninist history of the peoples of Uzbekistan [...].”³ To me the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* represents a curious example by which to ponder the reciprocity of ethnography and history.

But why ethnography? First, among the main authors and editors of these two volumes were scholars who either wrote ethnographic works themselves as Semenov did, or to whose works ethnographers deemed important to make reference to, as was the case, for example, with Iakubovskii’s writings. Moreover, the editor of the second volume, as already mentioned, had been the director of the Institute of Ethnography of the AN SSSR for two decades. Second, the title of these two volumes was telling about “peoples”—obviously a concept that has always been crucial to, and even formative for, the discipline of ethnography. This concept attracted attention for several reasons. One of these was the measures adopted by the Bolsheviks in the 1920s to carry out the internal administrative-territorial organization of the Soviet state on the basis of national features. In the end, each of the newly constituted republics and regions was assigned a certain “titular” nationality, and accordingly the particular territories and everything they comprised were associated with a specific nation. Thus the thesis of autochthony and of the natural rights to a given territory became central for the demands of the national elites, so that in this specific political framework, historiography could only be national when it was conceived as the history of the “titular” people. As a result, the history of the Soviet Union was understood as the history of the officially recognized people. From the very beginning, academics were involved in the processes of making up directories of titular peoples, drawing boundaries between republics and regions, and of canonizing national cultures and languages.⁴ And their very participation in these official state projects led to new debates about what a “people” actually was, brought about intellectual conflicts, and signaled differences that

³ *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana* [History of the peoples of Uzbekistan], vol. 1 (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo AN UzSSR, 1950), 6.

⁴ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

eventually resulted in attempts to monopolize or divide the discursive fields, either through institutional reforms or through the formation of solidarities between certain disciplines.

At first glance, the release of the volumes of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* and the discussions emerging from it were a remarkable illustration of the assumption that ethnographic knowledge constitutes a decisive part of authority as well as of the ideological project of constructing “history”—it seeks to act upon the consciousness of the people and to establish legitimacy for the political regime.⁵ In this regard authority was often treated in a narrow sense as a set of administrative units empowered to exercise legitimate violence. However, if one applied this scheme to the aforementioned case, it would become difficult to understand fully the occurrences in Uzbekistan, since it still remains uncertain who was actually representing authority and who fell victim to it. Furthermore, it does not explain how a certain hierarchy between the involved institutes and each of their competences was established. Nor does such a perspective consider the authors’ and editors’ adherence to specific disciplines and their individual approaches to writing history. The abundance of protagonists, titles, institutes, the confusing variety of standards, even the very fact that the second volume was published earlier than the first—all this decisively complicates the situation and makes it quite problematic simply to squeeze it into the relation between power and knowledge or into *a priori* established analytical frames like “Orientalism” and “colonialism.”

In my opinion it is necessary to treat the idea of ethnography’s engagement with authority in the way that has already been put forward by post-colonial criticism, yet from a more sociological point of view.⁶ I suggest looking at ethnography as an “autonomous zone,”⁷ not dissociated from society and authority but open to them and at the same time possessing its own rights, logics, and inner dynamics. Ethnography—that is an institutionalized field, a set of different institutions and hierarchies, of rights and statuses bearing the label “ethnography.” Ethnography—that is the individual identity of scholars adhering to different specializations, and sometimes even of people outside the institutionalized academic sphere. Ethnography—

⁵ See Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and Colonial Encounter* (New York: Humanity Press, 1973); Shoshana Keller, “Story, Time, and Dependent Nationhood in the Uzbek History Curriculum,” *Slavic Review* 66, no. 2 (2007): 257–277.

⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1984).

⁷ A. Blium and M. Mespule, *Biurokraticheskaia anarkhiia: statistika i vlast' pri Staline* [Bureaucratic anarchy. Statistics and power under Stalin] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008), 10.

that is a discursive field in which discussion takes place about precisely what it means to label something “ethnography” and what problems, questions, vocabulary, lines of argumentation, and legitimations are necessary to do so. It seems to me that such a perspective would seriously rectify the aforementioned point of view that ethnographic knowledge appears merely as an instrument of authority or even coincides with it. Rather, ethnography represents a field where conflict and competition occur and where attempts of domination and resistance become visible. Both the dispositions within this field and the disciplinary boundaries themselves exercise an influence, reinforcing and strengthening the discipline on the one side, just as they promote criticism and even destruction on the other.

To put it another way, I suggest treating the history of Soviet ethnography as a process of continuous institutional and discursive redefinition of what makes up ethnography. In doing so my analysis will focus on the problem of ethnic history in Central Asia, the discussions of which had an obvious effect on the vocabulary as well as identity of the Soviet ethnographers in the 1940s and 1950s. First I will examine the personal history of three figures—Semenov, Iakubovskii, and Tolstov—who were involved in writing the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. I try to trace their academic careers in considering their statuses, their institutional positions, their interests, and their conceptual preferences. Through the prism of their destinies, I attempt to look at the institutional field and the place ethnography occupied in it. Furthermore, I will delve into the ideas underlying the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* and those of its critics. Among other things I will show how these ideas were reflected in the book itself and how they found expression in other publications of the authors. By examining the various perspectives, I will explore the discursive field in which different conceptual approaches competed with each other. Such a correlation of the narrative about personal biographies and institutions with the analysis of the texts proper makes it possible, I hope, to discern more clearly the intersection of different fields and to understand better the mechanisms that determined the historical trajectories of ethnography.

People and Institutions

The eldest of the three figures, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov, born in 1873, was already an established scholar when the Tsarist Empire collapsed and gave way to the new Soviet state. When the monarchy was overthrown in 1917, he was serving as vice-governor of the Samar-

kand region (*oblast'*) in Turkestan in the position of a general. Though he was a government official, Semenov nonetheless was also recognized as an authority on the local languages, history and culture. As early as during his academic training at the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages in Moscow he attended lectures on ethnography, and afterwards, as he lived in Tashkent, he regularly published in several academic journals and corresponded with renowned scholars such as the Orientalist V.V. Bartol'd. Finally, in the 1920s Semenov taught at the Oriental faculty of the Central Asian University in Tashkent, and in 1925 he published in the anthology *Tajikistan*, among contributions of Bartol'd and other academics, an article about material monuments of Aryan culture. The article claimed that the Tajiks were "the descendants of the oldest indigenous people of the land, the Aryans of Asia." According to him all monuments of the territory up to the sixteenth century, that is, until the accession of the Sheibanid dynasty, had to be ascribed entirely to them.⁸ However, in 1930 and 1931, legal proceedings were taken against the staff of the Oriental faculty because of anti-Soviet agitation. Semenov was sentenced and exiled, but later on he was able to resume teaching at the Central Asian University. During the war years 1941 and 1942, most of Moscow and Leningrad's scholars had to evacuate to Tashkent, enriching the city's active academic life noticeably. Semenov actually enjoyed being part of this community, which swiftly stimulated his scientific career: in 1943 he was appointed a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR and also headed the Institute for the Exploration of Oriental Handwriting.

In 1942 the decision was made to write the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. Formally, it was under the auspices of the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR together with the Institute of History of the AN SSSR. Practically, however, the work was essentially accomplished by Muscovite historians, and Semenov was chosen as one of the main authors for the second volume. The volume was published only five years later but soon met with negative reactions from the Uzbek scholars. In 1949 an extended session of the Department of Humanities of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR took place in which Uzbek representatives also participated. Here they accused Semenov of bourgeois behavior, as well as of advocating a pro-Iranian

⁸ A. Semenov, "Material'nye pamiatniki ariiskoi kul'tury" [Material monuments of Aryan culture], in *Tadzhikistan* [Tajikistan], ed. N. Korzhenevskii (Tashkent: Obshchestvo dlia izucheniia Tadzhikistana i iranskikh narodnostei za ego predelami, 1926), 113–150.

position in which they perceived an apparently overt anti-Uzbek attitude.⁹ Semenov officially had to atone for his “sins” and eventually admitted that his opinion had been harmful.¹⁰ Because of lack of support in Uzbekistan, Semenov left Tashkent in 1951 and, at the invitation of Bobodzhon Gafurov, first secretary of the Communist Party of the Tajik SSR, he moved to neighboring Tajikistan. There he soon became an academic of the Tajik Academy of Sciences and was appointed director of the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography. During his time in Stalinabad (today’s Dushanbe), Semenov was at the peak of his creative powers. He published a series of historical works, particularly a number of articles about the Sheibanids, a dynasty of Uzbek leaders of Central Asia in the sixteenth century. In 1956 Semenov was elected deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Tajik SSR, which virtually dispelled the last suspicion of political wrongdoing which had weighed on him all the time. Two years later the former tsarist general died in honor in Stalinabad.

The biography of Aleksandr Iur’evich Iakubovskii was not as impressive. Born in Samarkand in 1886, he graduated from the Oriental Institute in Petrograd in 1924, where the aforementioned V.V. Bartol’d was his teacher. Although the latter could not claim to be a staunch Marxist, he nonetheless was highly esteemed as a scholar possessing unique knowledge. Moreover he critically judged the Indo-European theories, which in turn brought his position more into line with the anti-colonial criticisms that had been developed by his colleague and close relative Nikolai Ia. Marr.¹¹ Marr founded and led the State Academy of the History of Material Culture, where Bartol’d obtained employment as head of the Central Asian Department and also as deputy director of the academy. It was here, too, that Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii took up employment.

⁹ *O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii istorii i istorii kul’tury narodov Uzbekistana. Stenograficheskii otchet rasshirennogo zasedaniia otdeleniia gumanitarnykh nauk Uzbekskoj SSSR. 21–27 aprelia 1949* [On the Marxist-Leninist illumination of history and of the history of the peoples of Uzbekistan. Stenographic report of the extended meeting of the Department of Humanities of the Uzbek SSR, April 21–24, 1949] (Tashkent: Izdatel’stvo AN Uzbekskoi SSR, 1951), 104–105.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹¹ See Yuri Slezkine, “N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics,” *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (1996): 826–862; Victor Shnirelman, “Zlokliucheniia odnoi nauki: etnogeneticheskie issledovaniia i stalinskaia natsional’naia politika” [Misfortunes of a discipline. Ethnogenetic research and Stalinist national politics], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 3 (1993): 52–68; Vera Tolz, *Russia’s Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

From the mid-1920s Iakubovskii regularly arranged expeditions to Central Asia and wrote a number of works about the history and archaeology of the region. As opposed to Semenov, who was particularly interested in the period of the House of Sheibanid and the subsequent era (sixteenth to eighteenth century), Iakubovskii explored the Timurid era of Central Asia and that of the Golden Horde (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), and his research even covered the periods before then. In 1937 he issued the book *The Golden Horde* with Boris D. Grekov, head of the Institute of History of the AN SSSR. This book was very successful and went through two further editions in 1941 and 1950.¹² In 1952 it even won the Stalin Prize, the highest Soviet award at that time. In fact, this work represented an important part of the new governmental and patriotic ideology launched by the Soviet leadership in the late 1930s. In so doing, Iakubovskii, who never had held any important position in the institutional hierarchy, became an influential figure in the scientific community. During World War II he was also evacuated to Tashkent, where he headed a branch of the Institute of the History of Material Culture. In 1941 he published a significant work about the origins of the Uzbek people, after which he was asked to participate in the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* and to write the first volume of the work. Upon his return to Leningrad, he headed the Sogdian-Tajik expedition. He became a member of the Tajik Academy of Sciences in 1951 and died two years later.

Descended from the family of a Cossack officer, Sergei Pavlovich Tolstov was born in St. Petersburg in 1907 but was soon sent to a children's home, since his close relatives had actively opposed the Bolsheviks.¹³ Eventually he managed to graduate from the historical-ethnological faculty of Moscow State University in 1930. But unlike Semenov and Iakubovskii, Tolstov was immediately embroiled in ideological struggles.¹⁴ In accusing numerous scholars of being harmful and of

¹² B. Grekov and A. Iakubovskii, *Zolotaia orda i ee padenie* [The Golden Horde and its demise] (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1950).

¹³ For more details, see Sergey Alymov, "Na puti k 'drevnei istorii narodov SSSR': maloizvestnye stranitsy nauchnoi biografii S.P. Tolstova" [On the way to "the ancient history of the peoples of the USSR." Little-known aspects of the academic biography of S.P. Tolstov], *Emograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 5 (2007): 125–144.

¹⁴ See Alymov, "Na puti k 'drevnei istorii narodov SSSR.'" See also Iurii Slezkin, "Sovetskaiia etnografiia v nokdaune: 1928–1938" [Knockdown of Soviet ethnography: 1928–1938], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1993): 113–125; Iurii Slezkin, *Arkticheskie*

apparently displaying anti-Marxist positions, Tolstov, in his publications as well as in his multiple public appearances, used language that was in absolute accord with the official rhetoric at that time. It is no surprise, then, that he soon became an advocate of Marr's theory and a harsh critic of "bourgeois science."

In 1934 and 1936, the political leadership called for a new history of the USSR to be written, focusing on the histories of all the peoples within the Soviet Union. To this end an initial meeting convened in 1938 at the Institute of History of the AN SSSR concerned with the question of ethnogenesis,¹⁵ and as a result a special committee was formed at the Department of History and Philosophy of the AN SSSR. It had to deal solely with the problems of ethnogenesis, and its directors made absolutely clear that Marr's ideas had to be taken as a general basis for the committee's work. In 1939 Tolstov joined this committee. At the same time an archaeological expedition under his leadership took up his work and set out for Khorezm, one of the regions in Uzbekistan that Aleksandr A. Semenov once had called "the center [*ochag*] of Aryan culture."¹⁶ Tolstov saw his own research on Central Asia as a part of the larger idea of rehabilitating the history of the former colonies, providing these regions with equal rights by incorporating them into world history, and describing their close interaction with the territory of Russia from the outset in antiquity.¹⁷ In the same year he was also appointed to the recently established chair of ethnography at the faculty of history at Moscow State University. In 1941, however, Tolstov went to the front, where he was soon injured, and ended up in Tashkent, where he vigorously took part in the academic debates about the history of Central Asia. In 1942–1943 he became director of the Institute of Ethnography of the AN SSSR, in 1948 his book *Ancient Khorezm* was awarded the

zerkala. Rossiia i malye narody Severa [Arctic mirrors: Russia and the small peoples of the north] (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), esp. 279–294.

¹⁵ N. Iusova, "Pervoe soveshchanie po voprosam etnogeneza i sozdanie spetsial'noi komissii po problematike proiskhozhdeniia narodov v kontekste aktualizatsii etnogeneticheskikh issledovaniia v SSSR (konets 1930-kh gg.)" [The first meeting on questions of ethnogenesis and the formation of a specific commission on the problem of the origins of the peoples in the context of the actualization of ethnogenetic research in the USSR (late 1930s)], *Problemy slavianovedeniia. Sbornik nauchnykh statei i materialov* 9 (Briansk, 2007): 95–113.

¹⁶ Semenov, "Material'nye pamiatniki ariiskoi kul'tury," 150.

¹⁷ Alymov, "Na puti k 'drevnei istorii narodov SSSR,'" 139–140. Incidentally, in his works around 1940, long before Edward Said, Tolstov criticized the concept of the "Orient" (*vostok*), which he considered a colonial invention of European scholars.

State Prize,¹⁸ and in 1953 he was appointed a corresponding member of the AN SSSR.

Although Tolstov's actual activities characterized him as an archaeologist chiefly occupied with excavations in Khorezm, he nonetheless officially held the title of the "main ethnographer" in the Soviet Union, heading the "Soviet school of ethnography." This school, as Tolstov explicitly put it, was a "branch of historical science" but had its own "hard-won positions" by "posing the problem of ethnogenesis and historical ethnography."¹⁹ He evidently tried to monopolize the issue of the origins of peoples and similarly attempted to turn the description of the peoples of the Soviet Union into a representative feature of the ethnographic discipline in particular. Curiously enough, Stalin's official criticism in 1950 against Nikolai Ia. Marr and Marrism in general helped consolidate this position significantly, because Stalin had declared the "peoples" (*narody*) the most important subject of history, endowing them with distinctive characteristics that could not be reduced to questions of class or economic development.²⁰ As a successor of Marr, Tolstov certainly experienced this moment with mixed feelings. Eventually, however, the new ideological viewpoint permitted the reinforcement of ethnography's monopoly on writing about peoples. Formally, Tolstov held the office of the director of the Institute of Ethnography until 1966, but because of a severe illness, his scientific activities ended earlier. He died in 1976.

From Imperial to Soviet History

In dealing with the biographies of those who took part in editing and writing the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*, the previous chapter pointed to the political and institutional field in which the collision of several conceptions took place. Here it becomes possible to discern that the scholars shifted in this field both vertically and horizontally and that their paths crossed and diverged, tracing quite different individual trajectories. Yet what they had in common was the discursive field and in particular those

¹⁸ Sergey Tolstov, *Drevnii Khorezm. Opyt istoriko-arkheologicheskogo issledovaniia* [Ancient Khorezm. Attempt at a historical-archaeological research] (Moscow: Izdanie MGU, 1948).

¹⁹ Sergey Tolstov, "Etnografiia i sovremennost'" [Ethnography and the present], *Sovetskaiia etnografiia*, no. 1 (1946): 3–11, here 8–9.

²⁰ Slezkine, "N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins," 858.

questions, problems and themes through which they entered into a dialogue with authority, with society, and eventually with each other. Especially by posing specific questions and their specific treatments, the scholars expounded and simultaneously legitimized their institutional as well as political dispositions and statuses.

Before we analyze the disputes, both overt and covert, the curiosity has to be noted that both volumes were titled the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. It is difficult to trace the exact origin of that title, but it was certainly not chosen offhandedly. Yet the title contained an obvious contradiction. It was about a Soviet national republic that had been named for one nation, the Uzbeks, yet the title referred not to one people but to “peoples” in the plural.

In the second volume appear three general lines of inquiry, or rather attempts to combine three kinds of logics to write history. The first is a chronological description of the political events, telling of the change of rulers, the struggle against internal as well as external enemies, and significant measures and reforms in that period. Although the exposition of such facts takes up most of the text, it appears not to be dominant in an ideological sense. It is instead the two other lines that raise this claim—the socioeconomic and the ethnic. Considering their very purpose, these two arguments certainly form the essential logic of the book. Its socioeconomic parts demonstrate the different types of economy and property, just as they show which social groups existed at a given form of government. Semenov describes the stage in which natural economy and feudal circumstances gradually disappeared and were followed by a period based on the exchange of goods and on the monetary system. This, in turn, paved the way for the establishment of specific economic and political relations with Russia and likewise heralded the conquest of the region by Tsarist Russia. In the ethnic paragraphs, however, Semenov explains the complex composition of the urban population, the continuous Turkicization as well as the fusion of the remaining groups and nationalities into the Uzbek tribe. Yet these two approaches obviously compete with each other. One deals with the description of the economic structure, the other focuses on the population, and both logics suggest integrating the region into two basic legitimizing narratives: the first into Marxism, the latter into a “titular” nationalism.

In this respect it is of particular interest how Semenov conceives of an “ethnic history” of Uzbekistan. Here again can be found several different lines and logics: in the paragraph “Uzbek Khanates in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century” within the section “Territory and Population of the

Uzbek Khanates,” the author gives a detailed ethnic description containing numerous different groups and nations (including Sarts, Iranians, Arabs, Gypsies, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Jews),²¹ as if this acknowledged that the book really deals with multiple peoples and not only with one single people. In any event, in this brief chapter these peoples interact, fuse, and divide and in so doing produce a stereoscopic image of reality.

This second volume starts with a general explanation of what “Uzbeks” actually are, how this notion cropped up, and whom it actually referred to. However, Semenov’s explanations seem contradictory. He writes that the previous use of that name “must not be confused” with the “contemporary Uzbeks.” Furthermore, he argues that “[c]urrently the label ‘Uzbeks’ is conferred upon that people of the Soviet Union who had historically evolved on the territory of Transoxiana (*Ma Wara’un-Nahr*) which is now a part of the Uzbek SSR.”²² Therefore the “roots of the ethnogenesis” of the current Uzbeks must be traced back “to far more ancient times,” as the first Turkish tribes had appeared in the territory of Uzbekistan. These Turks had continuously mixed among themselves as well as with other groups, which eventually led to the creation of an “Uzbek nationality (*narodnost*).” Unfortunately, Semenov provides no information about exactly when this process occurred.

And finally, in the third concept “ethnic history” looks like a clash or blend of the culturally and numerically predominant sedentary culture with the politically and militarily ruling conqueror-nomads who gradually settled down in the subjected territories, took over the sedentary way of life, and passed their language on to the local population. The nomads in the book were imagined as “Turks” and partly as “Turkicized (*oturechennye*) Mongols,” but actually he meant various tribes from both the former and the latter. Concerning the settled people Semenov describes them less accurately, but a few sentences unmistakably reveal that it is “the ancient population of Uzbekistan of Iranian descent” he was talking of.²³ This last conception was exceptionally popular in the historical-ethnographic narratives in the late tsarist period.²⁴ At that time Russian scholars commonly believed that the principal population of Central Asia was composed of

²¹ *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, vol. 2, 135–139.

²² *Ibid.*, 23.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23, 49.

²⁴ See Sergey Abashin, “Arkheologiia sredneaziatskikh natsionalizmov: Les mots et les choses” [Archaeology of Central Asian nationalisms. Les mots et les choses], *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2003): 497–522.

“Iranians” or “Aryans” who had built up the local civilization, whereas the “Turks” who came later on merely reaped the fruit of it or, as another version goes, simply destroyed this culture without replacing it with something comparable. Undeniably, this concept was influenced by the Indo-European theories that assumed the dissemination of “Aryan” culture all over the world. This idea appeared to be a part, albeit not a decisive one, of the *ancien regime*’s ideology to subjugate the Central Asian peoples, and in so doing it always felt it was acting in the name of Europe.²⁵ Starting his scientific activities with the ethnographic exploration of just the “Iranians” (Tajik highlanders) in the Pamir Mountains and also using the term “Aryan” in his works quite frequently, Semenov was noticeably affected by these theories. Accordingly, he considered himself a representative of an honorable European science.

This last point in particular, although expressed quite obscurely and ambiguously in the second volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*, encountered a dual criticism. In the discussions of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, Semenov was accused of alluding to the “Iranian cultural roots” of the Uzbek nationality. This was understood as an assault on the Turkish constituent of the Uzbek people and also as a negation of its achievements as well as its longtime settlement on the territory. In a 1949 meeting the Uzbek scholar and philosopher V. Iu. Zakhidov harshly attacked Semenov’s approach in his paper “Struggle for the Marxist-Leninist Explanation of Questions concerning History and Cultural History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan” because his “illumination of the history as well as cultural history of the peoples in Central Asia proceeds from a notorious pan-Iranianism.” Zakhidov continued, “it is peculiar that A.A. Semenov does not find anything Uzbek in the cultural monuments not only in the region of Bukhara, but also of Samarkand, Tashkent, Fergana, etc.!”²⁶ Marxist arguments were advanced against him, too. His former “Aryan” statements were attacked by Marr’s successors, for whom European colonialism, “Indo-European” theories, and any references to “Aryan” origins represented the major target of their criticism. In the course of the discussions, it was the historian R.N. Nabiev whose

²⁵ M. Lariuel’, “Umozritel’naia Tsentral’naia Aziia: poiski prarodiny ariitsev v Rossii i na Zapade” [Speculative Central Asia. The search of the original homeland of the Aryans in Russia and the West], *Vestnik Evrazii* 23, no. 4 (2003): 155–165; Sergey Abashin, “Les Sartes, une peuple d’avenir.’ L’ethnographie et l’Empire au Turkestan russe,” *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 17/18 (2009): 353–379.

²⁶ *O marksistsko-leninskoi osveshchenii istorii*, 20–22.

critique had picked up the Marrist rhetoric in 1949. To Nabiev it was not primarily the language that formed a national common feature: "Principally, the Uzbek people evolved out of the locally rooted nationalities (*narodnostei*) and tribes and also to a greater extent out of the in-migrants [...]. The existence of the Uzbek people (*narod*) dates from time immemorial." He concludes that "[t]he Uzbeks had existed before the sixteenth century, since it is nearly impossible for a whole people to arise in a short period of time or even within one century."²⁷

In Search of a Compromise

In his comment Nabiev did not refer directly to Marr but instead to Iakubovskii and Tolstov, whose authority he marshaled against Semenov. The most popular reference to Iakubovskii related to his short pamphlet on the question of the ethnogenesis of the Uzbek people, where he contended that "it is absolutely necessary to differentiate the conditions affecting the formation of a specific people from its name."²⁸ According to Iakubovskii the nomad Uzbeks immigrating to Central Asia in the sixteenth century were not the last wave of resettlement of Turkish-speaking groups, but they were the "last component [*slagaemym*]" in the ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks who had given their name to the region's Turkish-speaking population.²⁹ In other words: "The contemporary Uzbeks who are building up a communist society fraternally with the other peoples of the Soviet Union are not a people who does not know its origins [...] This people has a far-reaching and continuous history of its expansion on the territory of Uzbekistan [...]. It received its real name much later than it actually existed, and under no circumstances does this undermine its rights to a historical past preceding the appearance of its very name."³⁰ This conclusion obviously provided a theoretical foundation for developing a new, nationally oriented historiography, not only for the Uzbeks but also for other "titular" peoples in Central Asia. What the people called themselves was not nearly as important as what name contemporary scholars and politicians decided to give them. One only

²⁷ Ibid., 66–67.

²⁸ A. Iakubovskii, *K voprosu ob etnogeneze uzbekskogo naroda* [On the question of the ethnogenesis of the Uzbek people] (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo UzFAN, 1941), 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 18.

had to keep in mind that the classification of the former population had to be in accord with those categories that became the official nomenclature in the 1920s.

The American historian Edward Allworth called Iakubovskii's approach "racialist," i.e., addressing physical features, culture, and language but not one's own consciousness.³¹ He also contended that behind Iakubovskii's conception was hidden the Russian "non-love" towards the nomads and "Turkic-Mongol Golden Horde," that is, in the end a "non-love" towards the "real" Uzbeks who had come from the North to Central Asia.³² However, another American (former Soviet) historian, Yuri Bregel, treated these conclusions skeptically. Bregel pointed out that Iakubovskii played a crucial role in fostering the notion of the Uzbek nation, and he recognized its rights on the territory as well as the richness of its culture. Moreover, Bregel argued that the author was driven not so much by a desire to "help the Uzbek colleagues prove the antiquity of their nation" as by a theoretical commitment to incorporate Central Asia into Marr's conception, which implied that all peoples develop similarly by going through different stages of ethnic and linguistic transformations, regardless of their regional specificity.³³ Bregel adds, however, that Iakubovskii himself was no Marxist but that, in taking up this position, he was trying to demonstrate his political loyalty to the regime.³⁴ To my mind it seems quite difficult to label Iakubovskii a dogmatic successor of Marr, although he started to work in the State Academy of the History of Material Culture under the latter. In Iakubovskii's works there are not many references to Marr or to significant representatives of his doctrines. Furthermore, little of the Marxist terminology itself can be found in his works. Thus it could be useful in this context to turn once again to Iakubovskii's academic teacher Bartol'd and to remember that he was quite critical of the Indo-European theories according to which the nomads had brought

³¹ Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present; A Cultural History* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), 239–242.

³² This point was made by Alisher Il'khamov, "Arkheologiya uzbekskoi identichnosti" [Archaeology of the Uzbek identity], in *Etnicheskii atlas Uzbekistana* [Ethnic atlas of Uzbekistan], ed. A. Il'khamov (Tashkent: Institut Otkrytoe obshchestvo, 2002), 295–299. See also Alisher Il'khamov, "Iakubovskii and Others: Canonizing National History," in *Exploring the Edge of Empire: Soviet Era Anthropology in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, eds. F. Mühlfried and S. Sokolovskiy (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011), 237–257.

³³ Yuri Bregel, "Notes on the Study of Central Asia," *Papers on Inner Asia* 28 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

nothing but regression and destruction into the Aryan world.³⁵ Likewise, he had written disapprovingly about the activities of the “Turkestan Circle of Lovers of Archaeology,” of which he himself, incidentally, was a member: “The exaggerated ideas of the cultural merits of the Aryans and the barbarism of the Turks necessarily found its expression in the understanding of the scientific tasks of Russia in Turkestan. As early as 1895, the year of its foundation, the local archaeological circle was instructed by the highest representative of Russian authority to explore the ancient Aryan culture of the region, which had been destroyed by the Turk-barbarians and which was to be re-established under the rule of other Aryans: the Russians.”³⁶ Bartol’d rejected this interpretation in pointing to the cultural achievements seen in the age of the Timurids.

Iakubovskii followed Bartol’d’s cautious criticism by adjusting it to the new political circumstances. In 1941, discussing the Uzbeks’ ethnogenesis, he highlighted that the Turks appeared on the territory of Uzbekistan in ancient times, and that in doing so they did not work to destroy the local culture. He also pointed out that the Sogdians as well as the Khorezmians—two ancient Iranian-speaking peoples about which Iakubovskii fails to give more detailed information—had been Turkicized and had become a part of the Uzbeks. But this point, too, remains a mere assertion. Iakubovskii’s only answer concerned the historicity of the “Uzbek people” reaching back to ancient times, by which he gave the scholars and ideologues the right to name as “Uzbek” any group living in that region up to the sixteenth century. Yet after the critical attacks on Semenov and the condemnation of “pan-Iranianism,” the question still remained of how to divide the ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks from that of the Iranian-speaking Tajiks and how to split history between the two national republics. Iakubovskii addressed exactly this problem in the first volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* issued in 1950. With regard to the inner structure, this first volume, however, differs somewhat from the second, which had been published three years before. Generally, this text’s narratives about the ethnic composition of the population do not appear in a single chapter; instead the information is spread all over the lengthy

³⁵ V.V. Bartol’d, “Sostoianie i zadachi izucheniiia istorii Turkestana (1913–1914)” [State and tasks of the exploration of the history of Turkestan (1913–1914)], in V.V. Bartol’d, *Sochineniia* [Works], vol. 9 (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1964), 509, 517.

³⁶ V.V. Bartol’d, “Zadachi russkogo vostokovedeniia v Turkestane (1914)” [Tasks of Russian Oriental studies in Turkestan (1914)], in Bartol’d. *Sochineniia*, vol. 9, 529.

explanations of political events. This lacuna, however, was compensated by Iakubovskii's foreword, which was entirely dedicated to the complex of ethnogenesis and obviously referred to the discussion that had arisen about the second volume.³⁷

He begins his explanations with the assertion that if hitherto the scholars had been writing a history of Central Asia as a whole, now they had to write histories of "its individual peoples."³⁸ Indeed in some cases, Iakubovskii concedes, writing such a history could be easy. In others, however, where histories are entangled, it becomes difficult, particularly in the Uzbek and Tajik case. The history of these peoples, as he puts it, is much older than the history of their names: "The composition of the Uzbek and Tajik peoples embraces a history of dozens of centuries, including within its process numerous tribes and nationalities that were a part in the formation of the people as true historical constituents [*slagaemykh*] and that represent what in historical scholarship is called ethnogenesis [...]."³⁹ Furthermore, Iakubovskii suggests two lines of argumentation. The first claims that the resettlement of the Turks in this region, albeit in-migrants to Central Asia, started long before the advent of the Arabs, and that accordingly, all Turkic-speaking tribes and nationalities that turned into non-nomadic residents have to be included in the ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks. The second argumentation, however, contends that the history of the Uzbeks has to consider not only the Turkic-speaking but also Iranian-speaking groups who had gradually become Turkicized and therefore appear as predecessors of the modern Uzbeks, too. Accordingly, in the formation process of the present Tajiks, both Iranian-speaking and Turkic-speaking tribes had participated, but in different proportions.⁴⁰

In his foreword Iakubovskii was obviously concerned about preserving the Uzbeks' symbolic rights to territory and culture. At the same time, he attempted to tread a kind of middle ground between the national histories of two adjacent republics, for which he invoked a whole series of possible arguments. But apparently he did not notice that these two types of reasoning referred to two different conceptual approaches that would conflict if taken to their logical conclusion. In the first case he spoke of a people with one language and one culture that resided in one territory, who had changed in name only. In the second case, however, he referred to a con-

³⁷ *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, vol. 1, 7–14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

tinuous mixing and transformation of peoples consisting of different languages and cultures. It was precisely this latter concept that was championed by Marr and his advocates, who stated that “ethnic cultures with regard to their genesis do not exist as such.” Marr emphasized that “in this sense there are no tribal cultures separated by their origins, but there is the culture of mankind going through certain stages of development. These were preserved partly or arbitrarily in tribes, often in an entire group or even several groups of backward tribes and nations. But the culture itself is unitary from its very origin, and all its differentiations were the result of the only creative process on the different levels of its development.”⁴¹

Marrism and National Histories

In his foreword Iakubovskii referred to Tolstov as a “contemporary historian” making a “major contribution” to the solution of the “complicated problem of the ethnogenesis of Central Asia in ancient times.”⁴² The Uzbek scholar A.A. Il’khamov assumes that Tolstov has to be considered a disciple of Iakubovskii.⁴³ Yet their points of view, though similar, were not identical. Among the authors treated here, Tolstov was the one whose position was probably closest to Marr’s approach. In the popular 1943 pamphlet *Ancient Culture of Uzbekistan*, Tolstov expounded his view in the section “Library of Combatants”: “The Uzbek people (*narod*) was composed of different tribes and nationalities that were known under changing names in ancient times and the Middle Ages [...]. The history of the name of a people is not always equivalent to the history of the people itself.” He emphasized this already well-known position: “Among the peoples who finally coalesced into one integral whole and who ultimately participated in the history of the Uzbek people for centuries can be found representatives of entirely different groups concerning race, language, and culture [...].”⁴⁴ He added that only Soviet rule was able to lay “the foundations for the final completion of the national consolidation of the Uzbek people.”⁴⁵ In a session of the committee of ethnogenesis taking place in

⁴¹ Nikolai Marr, *Izbrannye raboty* [Selected works], vol. 1 (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo GAIMK, 1933), 236.

⁴² *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, vol. 1, 9.

⁴³ Il’khamov, “Arkheologiya uzbekskoi identichnosti,” 299.

⁴⁴ Sergey Tolstov, *Drevniaia kul'tura Uzbekistana* [Ancient culture of Uzbekistan] (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo UzFAN, 1943), 5–6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

Tashkent in 1942, Tolstov read the paper “Crucial Problems of the Ethnogenesis of the Peoples in Central Asia,”⁴⁶ in which he expounded his ideas in fully Marxist language.

Here he stated that ethnogenesis constitutes a complex problem that has to be explored in a collective effort by historians, archaeologists, ethnographers, linguists, and anthropologists. For that reason this question should not be solved for each people separately but against the backdrop of a “global process of linguistic and ethnic developments [*mirovogo glotto- i etnogenicheskogo protsessa*].” Tolstov severely criticized attempts to perceive history as a unilinear process, “to find for each people one basic ethnic root” and “to trace this back [historically] as far as possible.” In refusing to examine one single group, he instead proposed to acknowledge “from the very outset a complexity of the ethnic origins of each people” and suggested delving into all “processes of ethnic interactions within the limits of particular, naturally as well as historically demarcated territories or within the framework of socio-political communities displaying a territorial stability and a certain ability to reproduce themselves in the course of the historical process.”⁴⁷ Tolstov assumed that at the end of the first millennium B.C.E., Central Asia had been part of a region in which “proto-Uralic-Altaic” and “proto-Indo-European” languages already existed and from which the Uzbek and Tajik language, respectively, later developed. “The decisive historical moment” occurred when the “glottogonic” (concerning the formation of language) and “ethnogenic” (concerning the formation of the “ethnic core”) processes were “nearly complete.” With regard to the Uzbeks, Tolstov presumed this completion took place under the Karakhanids in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and for Tajiks he believed it occurred under the Samanids in the ninth and tenth centuries. Thus the Uzbeks and the Tajiks gradually became similar to each other, developed their own historical symbols and, furthermore, assimilated to the Russian and European nations, which were also mainly formed at that time. Thereafter these peoples continued developing, went through processes of differentiation, amalgamation, and acculturation, and were also complemented by “new ingredients.” It was only in the nineteenth and twentieth century that the present Central Asian nations were finally formed. “None of these peoples,” Tolstov concluded, “directly originated in any ancient ethnic group whatsoever.” Instead,

⁴⁶ “Sessiiia po etnogenezu Srednei Azii” [Session on the ethnogenesis of Central Asia], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 6–7 (1947): 303–305.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 303.

conversely, the local and in-migrant peoples in various proportions made up the present peoples.⁴⁸

This last sentence obviously contradicted those authors who conceived of a region's history as the history of a single contemporary nation. One of those authors, to a certain extent, was the secretary for propaganda of the TsK of the Communist Party in Tajikistan, Bobodzhon Gafurov, who had published a book in Stalinabad called *The Tajik People in the Struggle for Freedom and Independence of Its Home Country*.⁴⁹ Immediately after its publication in 1944, Tolstov first criticized it in a session of the TsK VKP(b) and then again in a paper read at the Office of Propaganda and Agitation of the TsK. He stated that "some Tajik historians strive to attribute all ancient Central Asian civilization only to the predecessors of the Tajiks, on the simple ground that the ancient population of Central Asia spoke in languages belonging to the Iranian linguistic group [...]. However, the traditions of ancient Central Asian civilizations live in the culture of all other Central Asian nations, and to a certain extent the Uzbeks, too, notwithstanding their Turkic tongue, certainly came from the same line as the Sogdians and Khorezmians, just as the Tajiks descend from the Sogdians and Bactrians [...]. The authors of a Tajik history [consciously] drive a wedge between them [...]." ⁵⁰ As Tolstov then suggested rewriting national histories under the strict supervision of the central authorities, it was obvious that he himself wished to be such a supervisor.⁵¹ Likewise, Tolstov leveled harsh criticism against Semenov's works on the material monuments of Iranian (Aryan) culture.⁵² Although the first

⁴⁸ Ibid., 304.

⁴⁹ B. Gafurov and N. Prokhorov, *Tadzhikskii narod v bor'be za svobodu i nezavisimost' svoei rodiny. Ocherki iz istorii tadzhikov i Tadzhikistana* [The Tajik people in the struggle for freedom and the independence of its home country. Sketches from the history of the Tajiks and Tajikistan] (Stalinabad: Institut istorii, literatury i iazyka Tadzhikskogo filiala AN SSSR, 1944).

⁵⁰ Sergey Tolstov, "Dokladnaia zapiska" [Report], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 5 (2007): 163–166, here 164–165.

⁵¹ The criticism never had any effect on Gafurov's career, so in 1952 his book was released in Russian: *Istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda* [History of the Tajik people] (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1952). Four years later he was appointed head of the Oriental Institute (*institut vostokovedeniia*) AN SSSR and later became a member of the AN SSSR itself.

⁵² According to the memoirs, Semenov replied to this criticism among his colleagues: "Well, what's so curious about my being a bad Marxist? It would have been much more curious if the opposite had come true and the former governor of Turkestan proved to be a good Marxist." See: L. Rempel', *Dalekoe i blizkoe. Bukharskie zapisi* [Near and far.

volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* reflected this Marxist criticism, it nevertheless bore imprints of a compromise between the different conceptions that Iakubovskii had previously tried to formulate, as we have already expounded above.

In 1955 and 1956, the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* (whose planned third volume, covering the Soviet period, never came out) was published in a revised version now titled *History of the Uzbek SSR*. The editor, as well as author of a series of chapters, was Tolstov. In the foreword he explained the revision: "In recent years new research and investigations have produced a significant amount of materials, and the questions concerning the historical periodization as well as the ethnogenesis of the Uzbek and other peoples in Central Asia have been more thoroughly elaborated [...]. All this has required a radical reconsideration of the materials in both volumes, which eventually necessitated a second revised edition [...]."⁵³ Aside from the new title, which eliminated the former ambiguity, the structure of the volumes also changed: the first covered the history up to the October Revolution in 1917, while the second was dedicated to the Soviet period. But given the length of the period covered by the first volume, the pre-revolutionary period "necessarily" had to be divided into two parts—that is, into two books. This was particularly justified by the "increase" and "strengthening" of the relations with the "Russian state": one covered everything prior to the mid-eighteenth century, and the other spanned the period from then until the collapse of the *ancien regime*. In his foreword Tolstov elaborated on that point: "In both the first and the second part, significantly more attention has been directed to the processes of ethnogenesis, to the emergence and expansion of Turkic-speaking elements, as well as to the increase of interior interactions of tribes and peoples in Central Asia [...]."⁵⁴ Moreover, the focus shifted to the era before the twelfth century, which evidently coincided with Tolstov's own research interests.

The text of the first part of the first volume of the *History of the Uzbek SSR* was based on the first and the second volumes of the former *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. Its structure, however, was more aligned with the Soviet-Marxist conception of history by dividing it into prehis-

Notes from Bukhara] (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo literatury iskusstva imeni Gafura Guliyama, 1981), 15–16.

⁵³ *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR* [History of the Uzbek SSR], vol. 1 (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo AN UzSSR, 1955–1956), v–vi.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

toric, slave-owning, and feudal periods. The part dealing with slave-owning societies incorporated new chapters of Tolstov's work, whereas the section addressing feudalism integrated shorter texts of Iakubovskii and Semenov. The latter in particular was significantly abridged: parts of the chapters mentioning the ethnic composition of the population, as well as all of the author's assessments concerning the history of the peoples in the region, were removed. But Iakubovskii's contributions, too, were modified: some were entirely eliminated, while others were added. For example, there were two new chapters on the ethnogenesis. One within the section on the Karakhanids in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was titled "Formation of the Uzbek and Tajik Nationalities." Another within the section on the Timurids addressed the "Steppe Region in Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century." The foreword implies that these two chapters were written not by Iakubovskii himself but by the Uzbek historian R.N. Nabiev, who was, as we have seen, one of the leading critics of Semenov in the session in 1949. These added chapters were based on a scheme of ethnogenesis that had been advocated by Tolstov, so Nabiev likewise held that at the end of a "century-long process," the Uzbek nationality was formed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Furthermore—slightly deviating from the official line—he stated that "[a]lready under the reign of the Samanids, the foundations of the two peoples clearly loomed: the Tajiks as well as a Turkic-speaking people, later labeled Uzbeks, who likewise played an important role in the socioeconomic and cultural life of the country." He also emphasized that "the Turkic-speaking population [...] was the pivotal population on the territory of present Uzbekistan," whereas the "Tajik people developed on the territory that it has been occupying for one thousand years."⁵⁵ Additionally, even Semenov's statement that "the name 'Uzbek' was given to the people" had been modified to say "the people bears the name 'Uzbek.'"

Notwithstanding the meanwhile overt prosecution of Marr and Marxism, the new *History of the Uzbek SSR* nevertheless formulated the ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks in a consistent Marxist logic: "The present Uzbek socialist nation, like any other nation, is not a tribal nor a racial category. According to Marxist-Leninist theory, the constituents of the Uzbek nation developed over a long period on the territory of Central Asia. The foundation of the Uzbek nationality is constituted not by the immigrating Desht-i Kipchak nomads, who came comparatively late, in the fifteenth century, but by the ancient people of Sogdia, Fergana, and Khorezm, who

⁵⁵ Ibid., 269–270.

led a settled life from time immemorial (*s otdalenneishikh vremen*) and were farming the land just as those Scythic and old Iranian nomadic tribes of the Saka and the Massageteans did [...]. Because they were on common territory and had continuous economic and cultural relations, in time all of these tribes blended into one ethnic entity, into which were added new groups settling on this very territory: Hunnish, Hephthalite, Turkic, Mongol, and other tribes. All of them gradually intermingled and assimilated to the population that lived here previously, and as a result a new Turkic-speaking nationality was formed—the basis for the creation of the Uzbek nationality. The other part of the previous population, which was less affected by assimilation to the Turkic tribes, retained its language—out of this developed the Tajik nationality.”⁵⁶

Tolstov’s idea of writing the history of ethnogenesis of the peoples in Central Asia also manifested as part of the book series *Narody mira* (Peoples of the World), which was published around 1960 by the Institute of Ethnography; both an abridged and a complete edition of the series have been issued.⁵⁷ Here Tolstov and his co-author Tat’iana Zhdanko depicted the emergence of the peoples in the region as a continuous process of ethnic intermingling of different ancient and medieval tribes and groups among themselves. About the Uzbeks one can read that their “most ancient predecessors” were the “local peoples (*narody*) and tribes,” that is, the Khorezmians, Sogdians, Saka, and Massageteans. “The local Iranian-speaking population,” they went on, “mixed with the Turkic tribes” and passed on to them their economic and cultural traditions and, conversely, adopted the latter’s language.⁵⁸ Both authors further made clear that “the research of the intricate history regarding the emergence of nationalities in Central Asia shows that none of them directly descends from any ancient

⁵⁶ Ibid., 373. In 1967 the *History of the Uzbek SSR* was republished, but in this edition, in addition to the Marxist concept of a blend of peoples in Central Asia, the idea resurfaced of the search for the ancient Turks as predecessors of the Uzbeks (see *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR v 4-kh tomakh* [History of the Uzbek SSR in four volumes] (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo FAN Uzbekskoi SSR, 1967). By that time Tolstov had lost his editorial influence.

⁵⁷ T. Zhdanko (with the collaboration of S. Tolstov), “Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana” [Peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan], in *Ocherki obshchei etnografii. Aziatskaia chast' SSSR* [Outline of general ethnography. The Asian part of the USSR], eds. S. Tolstov et al. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1960), 157–274; S. Tolstov and T. Zhdanko, “Osnovnye etapy etnicheskoi istorii narodov Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana” [Basic stages of the ethnic history of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan], in *Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana* [Peoples of Central Asia], vol. 1, eds. S. Tolstov et al. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1960), 38–114.

⁵⁸ Zhdanko, “Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana,” 176.

ethnic group whatsoever [...]. The peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan were tied to each other by the shackles of ethnic kinship [...].” In this way they reiterated their criticism of the representatives of “pan-Iranism” and “pan-Turkism.”⁵⁹ Thus, without explicitly referring to Marr himself, the Marrist version of the ethnogenesis of the Central Asian population still remained a significant feature of ethnographic publications on that topic, as it was already elaborated in the *History of Peoples of Uzbekistan* at the outset in 1947.

Conclusion

After being accused of pan-Iranism and after moving from Uzbekistan to Tajikistan, Semenov, an ethnographer by his initial interests, devoted the last years of his life to the exploration and rehabilitation of the Uzbeks-Sheibanids. The Leningrad archaeologist Iakubovskii, who had provided the historians and ethnographers with a popular formula of the Uzbek ethnogenesis, eventually concentrated all his energies on the excavations of ancient cities in Tajikistan. Finally, the Muscovite Tolstov, an ethnographer by education who was concerned all his life with archaeology in Uzbekistan, had assumed the leadership of Soviet ethnography and came off as a strongly charismatic figure. But his works, which were Marrist in spirit and often extravagant in content, have virtually fallen into oblivion nowadays. All three characters, though belonging to different generations, regions, disciplines and institutions, ended their active academic career at about the same time in the 1950s.

The discussion of these three authors with regard to the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* around 1950 represents merely a small episode in which different interests clashed. Nevertheless, through these events it becomes possible to track very different subjects, such as the struggle between the center and the Central Asian elites; the struggle between the elites of several Central Asian republics; the struggle within the center itself, that is, between Moscow’s and Leningrad’s academic elites; the struggle between the representatives of different academic generations; the struggle between different institutions over status and funding; the struggle between the disciplines each exclusively claiming the object of study for themselves; and also the struggle between the different conceptual approaches. Using the example of the *History of the Peoples of*

⁵⁹ Ibid., 178–179.

Uzbekistan, it becomes apparent how the debate on cultural and historical interplay between the Uzbeks and Tajiks, two Central Asian titular nations, first emphasized the notion of people (*narod*), and that in the struggle for its definition, the Marxist conception of ethnogenesis promoted by the Soviet Union's chief ethnographer, Sergei Tolstov, won out. This victory was a result of Tolstov's success in the institutional field, where he held many key positions. He succeeded in convincing the Uzbek elite, who had just started writing the history of their nation, that claiming an autochthonous yet compound origin of the Uzbeks best corresponded to their political interests.

Ethnography did not impinge on these discussions as a fully developed discipline at all.⁶⁰ On the contrary, it was specifically in these debates that the formation of ethnography actually took place.⁶¹ Tolstov's influence on the writing of the Uzbeks' ethnogenesis was closely linked to the efforts he and like-minded figures made to establish a Soviet ethnography that would form the chief expert community for questions concerning nations and ethnogenesis. It was precisely during such struggles for one's "object" that the nascent discipline accumulated experience, authority, and ambitions to propound a new, i.e., ethnic, history, not only of the Soviet Union but of the whole world. Yet the formation of a new institutional field did not automatically mean that the discursive field was entirely seized by adherents of the dominant conceptual approach. Differing points of view developed by Semenov, Iakubovskii, and other scholars did not lose their legitimacy—their supporters survived, and research, investigations, and debates continued just as further attempts were still made to revise theories. The struggle for influence and for the right to speak the truth continued and caused decisive turns in the history of Russian and Soviet ethnography.

(Translated from the Russian by *Roland Cvetkovski*)

⁶⁰ Francine Hirsch, for example, spoke of "ethnographic knowledge" as an already full-blown phenomenon, and in doing so she classed among the ethnographers the geographers, archaeologists, physical anthropologists, linguists and also the *kraevedy*, i.e., the local historians; see Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 10.

⁶¹ F. Bertran, "Nauka bez ob'ekta? Sovetskaia etnografiia 1920–30-kh gg. i voprosy etnicheskoï kategorizatsii" [Science without object? Sovietkaia etnografiia in the 1920s and 1930s and questions of ethnic categorization], *Zhurnal sotsiologii i sotsial'noi antropologii* 6, no. 2 (2003): 165–179; Frédéric Bertrand, *L'anthropologie soviétique des années 20–30. Configuration d'une rupture* (Bordeaux: Presses universitaires de Bordeaux, 2002).

Symbols, Conventions, and Practices: Visual Representation of Ethnographic Knowledge on Siberia in Early Modern Maps and Reports

Maike Sach

As cultural artifacts, pictures and images play an eminent role in ethnography in different European and non-European communities and societies using different concepts of images and codes of communication. Pictures (and also immaterial mental images) are thus objects of ethnological research. But they are not only that: the immediacy of images seems to provide depicted objects and scenes with visual evidence of real existence. Pictures are able to support and to complete the meaning of a text, but they do not necessarily need a written explanation to be understood. It was since the formation of ethnology as a modern science, referring primarily to European patterns of thought and paradigms, that various techniques and strategies of visual representation were used as important media of documentation, description, and depiction.¹

This dual function of pictures in ethnology has influenced workaday practices and the forming of epistemic ideals since ethnology started to develop gradually as an empiric discipline from the eighteenth century on. The first ethnographic knowledge was gathered in early modern times. It was disseminated in texts but likewise found its way into cartographic representations that included depictions of foreign peoples. Those pictures

¹ Iris Därmann, “Ethnologie” [Ethnology], in *Bildwissenschaft. Disziplinen, Themen, Methoden*, ed. Klaus Sachs-Hombach (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005), 174–184; Helge Gerndt, “Bildüberlieferung und Bildpraxis. Vorüberlegungen zu einer volkswissenschaftlichen Bildwissenschaft” [Tradition of images and pictorial practice. Preliminary considerations on ethnological iconography], in *Der Bilderalltag. Perspektiven einer volkswissenschaftlichen Bildwissenschaft*, eds. Helge Gerndt and Michaela Haibl (Münster: Waxmann, 2005), 13–34.

were often borrowed from a traditional pictorial repertoire forming a very special inventory of condensed and sometimes highly coded knowledge. This pool of summarized knowledge translated into a pictorial language underwent an adaption and transformation due to the development of ethnology as a science: initially, ethnology was closely linked with the history of nature and regarded as a natural science before it was considered a discipline within the humanities. Great expeditions, organized by academies and learned societies, and financed by governments for the exploration and subsequent occupation of hitherto *terrae incognitae*, were also occasions for early ethnologists trained to follow the model of universal scholarship to collect artifacts of various kinds (cult objects, weapons, articles of daily use, costumes, etc.) for documentary purposes.² Sometimes they bought those artifacts; sometimes they took them without permission for collections in their home countries as future sources for inventories of ethnographic museums to be found in the following decades. The consequences were all the same: pieces arousing the curiosity and interest of European ethnographers were removed from their original environment. Often they were presented in isolation from their original context of use, without a clear hint of their special meaning or provenance of the objects.³

To avoid such a lack or omission of data, precise description and documentation were needed: measurement, classification, and careful documentation in logs and diaries in various forms, supplemented with drawings, were fundamental to producing and preserving knowledge already during the journey.⁴ Initially, especially in the early eighteenth cen-

² Philippe Despoix, *Die Welt vermessen. Dispositive der Entdeckungsreise im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* [Measuring the world. Dispositions of expeditions in the Age of Enlightenment] (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), 32–37.

³ Därmann, “Ethnologie,” 175; Gudrun Bucher, “Die Insel Kodiak im Spiegel der Sammlung des Barons von Asch” [Kodiak Island in the context of the collection of Baron von Asch], in *Ding—Bild—Wissen. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven nordamerikanistischer Forschung in Frankfurt a. M.*, ed. Cora Bender et al. (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2005), 39–52.

⁴ Despoix, *Die Welt vermessen*, 81–94; Gerhard Rudolph, “Operationen der Aufklärung: Beobachten—Messen—Experimentieren” [Operations of the Enlightenment: Observing—measuring—experimenting], in *Innovation und Transfer. Naturwissenschaften, Anthropologie und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Walter Schmitz and Carsten Zelle (Dresden: Thelem bei w.e.b., 2004), 3–9; Justin Stagl, *Eine Geschichte der Neugier. Die Kunst des Reisens 1550–1800* [A history of curiosity. The art of traveling] (Vienna: Böhlau, 2002), 74–76; Jan Altmann, “Pazifische Impulse. Entdeckungsreisen und visuelle Techniken der naturhistorischen Wissensrepräsentation” [Pacific stimuli. Expe-

ture, those items were not intended for publication, but later they became sources for official accounts reporting the course and the results of the expeditions. During the second half of the eighteenth century, prompt publication of the accounts of the respective journeys became the norm. From the very beginning those reports met with overwhelming interest from European governments and the learned European public.⁵ The newly acquired knowledge was presented as a mixture of texts, tables, maps, and various illustrations of exotic plants, animals, landscapes, artifacts and indigenous peoples. It can be described as a contemporary “multimedia presentation” and thus be considered in this special configuration as a construct and kind of fiction.⁶ Good illustrations were primarily used and perceived as material for cultural comparison. In addition they supplied scientists at home with data for their own work and provided the public with some sort of educated entertainment.⁷

In the Age of Reason, the production and reproduction of illustrations in print was expensive, laborious, and depended on the close cooperation of several professions.⁸ Scientists and artists of all kinds linked to the production of pictures were inclined to idealize an image to capture the essence of a depicted object or scene or to highlight patterns in the name of truth-to-nature and the epistemic concept of trained judgment.⁹ The invention of photography in the nineteenth century facilitated the process of documentation during expeditions or field work and provided scientists with material seemingly even more authentic and with higher visual evidence than the most detailed and most carefully prepared engravings of the same object or scene.¹⁰ In addition, those techniques of mechanized

ditions and visual techniques in representing knowledge in the field of history of nature], in *Kulturen des Wissens im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ulrich Johannes Schneider (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 523–532.

⁵ Stagl, *Geschichte der Neugier*, 187–193; Despoix, *Die Welt vermessen*, 94–103.

⁶ Despoix, *Die Welt vermessen*, 103–108; Altmann, “Pazifische Impulse,” 525–526; Martin Kemp, “‘Implanted in Our Natures’: Humans, Plants, and the Stories of Art,” in *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany, and the Representation of Nature*, eds. David Philip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 197–229.

⁷ Stagl, *Geschichte der Neugier*, 74; Despoix, *Die Welt vermessen*, 106–108.

⁸ Francis Haskell, *Maler und Auftraggeber. Kunst und Gesellschaft im italienischen Barock* [Patrons and painters. A study in the relations between Italian art and society in the Age of the Baroque], trans. Alexander Sahn (Cologne: DuMont, 1996), 468–469; Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objektivität* [Objectivity], trans. Christa Krüger (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007), 88–94.

⁹ Daston and Galison, *Objektivität*, 88–113.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 133–145.

imaging, like taking photographs, were considered less corruptible and open to interference than traditional procedures.¹¹ After the invention of moving pictures, the criterion of authenticity was a striking argument for rating film higher than photographs for scientific documentary purposes.¹²

But since the end of the twentieth century, all textual and visual techniques and strategies of representation underwent fundamental criticism due to research in the field of colonial studies and critical reflection on the theories, methods, and modes of close description within the discipline of ethnology itself. The scientific claim of ethnology to display impartially and adequately the reality of a foreign culture and its cultural codes alien to European or North American mental patterns and paradigms proved to be unsubstantiated. Studies pretending to display the realities of a foreign culture unerringly, accurately, and correspondingly with methodological approaches recognized within the disciplines of ethnology and anthropology were revealed as fictions created in order to construct European identities. Such findings and results were not restricted to the area of scientific representation in texts.¹³ The production of visual anthropology, including ethnological photographs formerly considered authentic representations of displayed scenes, was fundamentally criticized in the picturing-culture-debate, revealing how the photographic image and colonial or imperial imagination related to emphasizing a state of underdevelopment of the displayed.¹⁴ Such a visually confirmed state of underdevelopment could have been used (or misused) as a legitimation for an ostensible *mission civilisatrice* serving more or less hidden political or colonial aims. For the Russian context Margaret Dikovitskaya demonstrated this correlation based on the examination of two collections, the *Turkestanii al'bom*

¹¹ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, "Das Bild der Objektivität" [The image of objectivity], in *Ordnungen der Sichtbarkeit. Fotografie in Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technologie*, ed. Peter Geimer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), 29–99, 33–35, 59–62.

¹² Jay Ruby, *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film and Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 41–43.

¹³ Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the "Native" and the Making of European Identities* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), 38–72.

¹⁴ Därmann, "Ethnologie," 176–177; Michael Wiener, *Ikono-graphie des Wilden. Menschenbilder in Ethnographie und Photographie zwischen 1850 und 1918* [Iconography of the savage. Ideas of men in ethnography and photography between 1850 and 1918] (Munich: Trickster, 1990); Elizabeth Edwards, ed., *Anthropology and Photography 1860–1920* (New Haven, London: Yale: University Press, 1992); James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997).

(Tashkent, 1871–1872) and the *Tipy narodnostei Srednei Azii* (1876), presenting more than a thousand photographs trying to capture daily life in Central Asia. In particular, referring to the *Turkestanskii al'bom*, Dikovitskaya discovered that “the album’s composition provided a justification, in non-verbal form, as to how the Russian occupation should be seen as a magnanimous civilizing mission.”¹⁵

Nowadays ethnographic film and photography is not considered reliable for representing the characteristics and describing the differences of foreign cultures. It has become clear that subjective interferences in the process of producing pictures, even in such automated operations as taking photographs or shooting films, cannot be excluded. Selecting objects, choosing details, defining perspectives, or arranging scenes due to aesthetic preferences, patterns of perception, or cultural imprint, professional training, or education are not only interfering but influential factors constituting the imaging method and process.¹⁶ Last but not least, photography offered the possibility of retouching. To assure readers that the illustrations were not retouched or otherwise revised, photographs in scientific works were often reproduced as engravings or woodcuts.¹⁷ Therefore, in my opinion, it can be argued that, aside from their wrongly supposed impartialness and authenticity, ethnographic films and photographs are constructs like engravings of the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, which were prepared by several cooperating craftsmen, artists, and scientists on the basis of drafts, drawings, and real objects.

These general problems of visualization methods and strategies can also be observed in the history of Russian ethnography’s exploration of the indigenous peoples within the Russian sphere of control. This will be demonstrated in the present article on the basis of some early modern maps, prescientific travel accounts, and examples from the great expeditions that were organized in Russia in the eighteenth century. The objectives are threefold. The first is to review prescientific methods of displaying the “other.” The second objective is to show how those strategies changed due to the development of modern research practices and implementation of ethnology as a new science. The third aim is to reveal the mutual influence of picturing and

¹⁵ Margaret Dikovitskaya, “Central Asia in Early Photographs: Colonial Attitudes and Visual Culture,” in *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia*, ed. Tomohiko Uyama (Hokkaido: Slavic Research Center, 2007), 99–136, URL: http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no14_ses/04_dikovitskaya.pdf (February 13, 2013).

¹⁶ Därmann, “Ethnologie,” 177; Daston and Galison, *Objektivität*, 140–143.

¹⁷ Daston and Galison, *Objektivität*, 142–143.

research practices, as well as the impact of aesthetic training, conventions of perception, and circumstances of production of illustrations.

Prescientific Images and Ethnographic Material in Early Western Maps

For centuries, Western European rulers, merchants, and scholars took no notice of Russia. But at the end of the fifteenth century, Russia returned to their field of view. Not much was known about Muscovy; up-to-date and reliable information was scarce and not easy to obtain. Early in the century, this frustrating situation started to change when the first accounts on Russia at the dawn of the modern age appeared. The authors were humanists with a special interest in cosmography like Matthias von Miechow (Maciej z Miechowa), Albert Crantz, and Sebastian Münster, and clerics like Paolo Giovi and Johann Fabri, who had the opportunity to get some first-rate information from Muscovite diplomats during their missions at Western courts. They were ambassadors and envoys like the Austrians Sigismund von Herberstein and Augustin von Meyerberg or the Holstein Adam Olearius or Western merchants, who traveled to and within Russia for economic reasons. In their accounts they also recorded geographical data, which served both cartographers and cosmographers. But considering the paradigms and requirements of the genre of humanistic *historia naturalis* and early modern travel literature,¹⁸ they were primarily interested in various themes concerning history, especially religion, customs and manners, trade and natural resources.¹⁹ Above all, differences in the field of religion

¹⁸ Justin Stagl, "Der wohl unterwiesene Passagier. Reisekunst und Gesellschaftsbeschreibung vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert" [The well-instructed voyager. The art of traveling and the description of societies from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries], in *Reisen und Reisebeschreibungen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert als Quellen der Kulturbeziehungs-forschung*, ed. B.I. Krasnobaev et al. (Berlin: Verlag Ulrich Camen, 1980), 353–384, 364; Stagl, *Geschichte der Neugier*, 101–106.

¹⁹ Marshall T. Poe, "A People Born to Slavery": *Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476–1748* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002); Stéphane Mund, *Orbis russiarum. Genèse et développement de la représentation du monde "russe" en occident à la Renaissance* [Orbis russiarum. Birth and development of the representation of the "Russian" world in the West during the Renaissance] (Geneva: Droz, 2003). Some of the texts and maps appear in O.F. Kudriacev, ed., *Rossiiia v pervoi polovine XVI v.: vzgliad iz Evropy* [Russia in the first half of the sixteenth century. The European perspective] (Moscow: Russkii mir, 1997); Sigismund von Herberstein, *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii. Synoptische Edition der lateinischen und der deutschen Fassung letzter Hand Basel 1556 und Wien 1557*, ed. Hermann Beyer-Thoma (Munich, 2007), urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-babs-

and manners were perceived, often misunderstood, and eventually exposed in various publications, stressing the strangeness and otherness of Russians and the peoples of non-European origin within the Muscovite domain.²⁰ Herberstein in particular tried to present characteristics and differences in costumes, arms, or equipment for riding or other purposes of cavalry.²¹ Additionally, Olearius and Meyerberg were known for various frequently reproduced illustrations and maps.²² However, not all authors of travel accounts used illustrations.

The knowledge of Western European mapmakers about Russia, its eastern parts, and its neighbors grew slowly but steadily throughout the century. Starting in the first half of the sixteenth century they also charted Siberia, or at least some parts of it,²³ but their maps were not quite

0000000434 (February 13, 2013); on Herberstein, see Frank Kämpfer and Reinhard Frötschner, eds., *450 Jahre Sigismund von Herbersteins Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii, 1549–1999. Jubiläumsvorträge* [The 450th anniversary of Sigismund von Herberstein's *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, 1549–1999] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002); Samuel H. Baron, ed. and trans., *The Travels of Olearius in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967); Lloyd E. Berry and Robert O. Crummey, eds., *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968). On early prescientific knowledge about Siberia, see also Gudrun Bucher, "Von Beschreibung der Sitten und Gebräuche der Völker." *Die Instruktionen Gerhard Friedrich Müllers und ihre Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Ethnologie und der Geschichtswissenschaft* ["On the description of manners and customs of nations." The instructions of Gerhard Friedrich Müller and their impact on the history of ethnology and historiography] (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002), 43–64.

²⁰ Gabriele Scheidegger, *Perverse Abendland—barbarisches Russland. Begegnungen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im Schatten kultureller Missverständnisse* [Perverted Occident—barbarous Russia. Encounters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the shadow of cultural misunderstandings] (Zurich: Chronos, 1993).

²¹ Donald Ostrowski, "Sixteenth-Century Muscovite Cavalrymen," in *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*, eds. Valerie A. Kivelson and Joan Neuberger (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 28–32; A.E. Zhabreva, "Nemeckie puteshestvenniki XVI-XVII vv. Ob odezhdach zhitelej Moskovii" [German travelers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the clothing of Muscovy's population], in *G. F. Miller i russkaia kul'tura*, eds. Dittmar Dahlmann and Galina Smagina (St. Petersburg: Rostok, 2007), 261–270, 261–264.

²² Cf. various plates in Baron, ed. and trans., *The Travels of Olearius*, unnumbered; Leo Bagrow, *A History of Russian Cartography up to 1800*, ed. Henry W. Castner (Wolfe Island, Ontario: Walker Press, 1975), figs. 33–35; Zhabreva, "Nemeckie puteshestvenniki XVI-XVII vv.," 265–266.

²³ For a detailed survey, see Leo Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, ed. Henry W. Castner (Wolfe Island, Ontario: Walker Press, 1975).

accurate or exact. Sometimes those maps appeared in the cartographical tradition of landscape representations and bird's-eye views. Information about correct topographical representation was rare, for certain parts of the territory were nearly unavailable for Western mapmakers. These shortcomings resulted in literally blank spaces on the maps. It took decades, and in some cases centuries, to eliminate those deficiencies. During the sixteenth century Western cartographers and cosmographers started to include some ethnographic data in their maps of Russia and Siberia by recording names of indigenous peoples. At the same time the cartographic *horror vacui* fired the imagination of mapmakers and inspired them to fill the blanks with stereotyped illustrations of human beings, settlements, scenes of hunting or fighting, combined with written explanations often extracted from other texts and maps. This method was not new—using various stereotyped pictures, symbols, and texts in maps was in fact an old tradition from medieval cartography.²⁴ It was also an established and well-known practice in the early modern production of books, broadsheets, and pamphlets, using the same (or slightly varied) woodcut to display different persons or situations. Sometimes illustrations were placed into contexts totally different from those the original pictures were designed for.²⁵

The first ethnographic information related precisely to Siberian peoples and not only generalized to “Tataria” was apparently introduced into cartography by Martin Waldseemüller. In his *Carta Marina* (1516) he mentioned the Nogai Horde as a term, and he also inserted an illustration of a shaman riding a reindeer.²⁶ The name of the Nogai Horde was also included in the *Moscovia* of Battista Agnese (1525), who used data al-

²⁴ Jörg-Geerd Arentzen, *Imago mundi cartographica. Studien zur Bildlichkeit mittelalterlicher Welt- und Ökumenekarten unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Zusammenwirkens von Text und Bild* [The cartographic image of the world. Studies on the representativeness of medieval maps concerning the interrelation of text and picture] (Munich: Fink, 1984); P.D.A. Harvey, *The History of Topographical Maps: Symbols, Pictures and Surveys* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 84–102; Catherine Delano Smith, “Cartographic Signs on European Maps and their Explanations before 1700,” *Imago mundi* 37 (1985): 9–29, 10.

²⁵ Andreas Kappeler, *Ivan Groznyj im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften seiner Zeit. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des westlichen Russlandbildes* [Ivan the Terrible in foreign contemporary publications. A contribution to the history of the Western image of Russia] (Bern: Lang, 1972), 231.

²⁶ Dittmar Dahlmann, *Sibirien. Vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* [Siberia. From the sixteenth century to modern times] (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, and Zurich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009), 105; see also Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, 44–48.

ready known from ancient authors or geographers like Plinius, Strabo, and Ptolemaios. He also benefited from Giovio's description of the geography of Muscovy, containing original information from his meetings with Dmitrii Gerasimov, a Muscovite ambassador at the papal curia.²⁷ Apart from some names or very short commentaries, Agnese fitted into his map some stereotyped pictures of tents and three figures sitting on a chair or throne symbolizing princes, one of them a Tatar ruler. This method corresponds with contemporary European conventions of allegorizing rulership on maps,²⁸ as well as drawing from a rich repertoire of symbolic pictorial formulas associated with depictions of enthroned *maiestas* and theomorphic images of rulers.²⁹

Another reference to the Nogai Horde can be found on the *Moscovia* of Antonius Wied. He was a cartographer from Danzig and composed his map around 1542, publishing it in 1555. It contains far more details than Agnese's. Wied owed the additional information to Ivan Liatskii, a Russian refugee who served for several years in Muscovy in military and administrative positions. The rich material that Wied obtained from Liatskii was then supplemented with information from Herberstein.³⁰ Wied's map is full of pictures representing geographical data, such as courses of rivers, positions of settlements, and forests. He also used some more stereotyped pictures of horses, tents, riders, and wagons for visualizing nomadic living. Quite interesting for the adaptation of motifs and their transfer as a method of visualization is Wied's depiction of religious difference. In his map he described a non-Russian people

²⁷ H. Michow, *Die ältesten Karten von Russland, ein Beitrag zur historischen Geographie* [Ancient maps of Russia. A contribution to historical geography] (Hamburg, 1884; reprint: Amsterdam: Meridan, 1962), 20–35, 61–69; Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, 61–62; Giovio's text with commentaries and a Russian translation in O.F. Kudriacev, ed., *Rossii v pervoi polovine XVI v.*, 227–308.

²⁸ Michow, *Die ältesten Karten*, plate iii.

²⁹ Peter Burke, *Augenzeugenschaft. Bilder als historische Quellen* [Eyewitnessing. The uses of images as historical evidence], trans. Matthias Wolf (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2003), 67; Josef Engemann and Klaus Niehr, "Maiestas domini" [Majesty of the Lord], in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 6 (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003), 111–113; Uwe Fleckner, "Bildnis, theomorphes" [Theomorphic image], in *Handbuch der politischen Ikonographie*, eds. Uwe Fleckner et al., vol. 1 (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2011), 162–169; Martin Warnke, "Herrscherbildnis" [Image of the ruler] in *ibid.*, 481–490, 486–487.

³⁰ Cf. "Inscriptio tabulae Moscoviae" [Inscription on the map of Muscovy], in Kudriacev, ed., *Rossii v pervoi polovine XVI v.*, 309–312; Michow, *Die ältesten Karten*, 12–13 and plate ii; cf. also Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, 64–70.

named “Abdori” living in the northeast of Muscovy and presented an illustration showing four persons praying and kneeling in front of a statue. It depicts a woman wearing long clothing and a veil and holding a little child. From an iconographic point of view, this figure greatly resembles the Virgin Mary in Western art, but it is identified by a commentary placed directly on the map as “Zolotaja Baba,” a golden idol venerated by the local population and apparently first mentioned by Matthias von Miechow (1517).³¹ Later on the Zolotaja Baba is also described by Sigismund von Herberstein in his famous *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii* as a female idol with a son and a second child.³² Dittmar Dahlmann argues that this motif should probably symbolize the segregation of Christian and heathen regions.³³ It is true that this figure denotes a difference in beliefs, but it is also a direct translation of the description of a venerated female figure by use of a coded standard motif of European art. The artists who helped produce the map associated the descriptions of the Zolotaja Baba with the Virgin Mary and based her image on the visual repertoire of contemporary Western art. It is worth noting here that on maps of Russia Herberstein added to his *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, the Zolotaja Baba is not draped in a set of visual characteristics of the Virgin Mary. The standing female figure is depicted with a lance in her arms wearing ancient, respectively Muscovite, clothes.³⁴ Some years later the figure of the Zolotaja Baba, corresponding roughly to Wied’s version, appeared again in maps of Russia by the English merchant Anthony Jenkinson and by the German cartographer Gerhard Mercator (1572 and 1595).³⁵

The Jenkinson map in particular deserves a closer look. Jenkinson traveled extensively throughout Russia and collected important geo-

³¹ On iconography cf. M. Lechner, “Das Marienbild in der Kunst des Westens bis zum Konzil von Trient” [The image of the Virgin Mary in Western art up to the Council of Trent], in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum, vol. 3 (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), col. 181–210; on the Zolotaja Baba, cf. Michow, *Die ältesten Karten*, 39–40 and plate ii; Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 105.

³² Herberstein, *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, 271–272; Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 329, note 6.

³³ Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 105.

³⁴ Cf. Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, 69 (fig. 26) and 71 (fig. 28).

³⁵ Cf. Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Nuremberg: Johann Koler, 1572, reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 102–103; Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, 95 (fig. 48), 113 (fig. 63), 114 (fig. 65).

graphical material and ethnographic information from the Russian North.³⁶ His data was placed on a map first published in 1562 and later reprinted in Abraham Ortelius's atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570 and 1572).³⁷ In addition to well-documented parts of Russia, the map also covers the western regions of "Tataria," which contained less detailed topographical and geographical information. As consequence, and again due to *horror vacui*, those geographical blanks were filled with stereotyped depictions symbolizing a nomadic mode of living. It seems that Jenkinson was especially fascinated by the funeral rites of Kirgiz Tatars. On the map such rites were displayed with an illustration showing human corpses hanging in trees venerated by some kneeling persons. Due to their function as mediators between different worlds and spheres, shamans often received a different kind of burial than others in their communities. Apparently, Siberian peoples sometimes tried to guarantee that the deceased shaman's soul would rest between heaven and earth by placing the corpse not in a tomb but in trunks or branches of trees. Since to European eyes the scene looked like an execution, the vignette was explained by a Latin comment on religious issues underneath.³⁸

Funerals and worship among the Kirgiz Tatars and the placing of the cult of the Zolotaja Baba in the area ascribed to the Samoyeds are not the only visualizations of religious matters on the map. In the eastern parts of the Samoyed land are depicted two figures kneeling in front of a red rag hanging from a crossbar (or spear). The illustration is accompanied by a framed text. In my opinion this scene is borrowed from the top of the richly illustrated *Carta Marina* (1539) of the Swede Olaus Magnus,³⁹ but it can also be found as a vignette in his *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*

³⁶ Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, 98; Poe, "A People Born to Slavery," 42; Ekkehard Witthoff, *Grenzen der Kultur. Differenzwahrnehmung in Randbereichen (Irland, Lappland, Rußland) und europäische Identität in der Frühen Neuzeit* [Limits of culture. Perception of difference in border areas (Ireland, Lapland, Russia)] (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997), 61–67.

³⁷ Ortelius, *Theatrum*, 6–8.

³⁸ Reproduced in Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, 95 (fig. 48); also in Ortelius, *Theatrum*, 102–103, on shamanism cf. Gudrun Bucher, "Wahrnehmung und Beschreibung des Schamanismus durch Gelehrte des 18. Jahrhunderts" [Perception and description of shamanism by scholars of the eighteenth century], in *Sibirische Völker – Transkulturelle Beziehungen und Identitäten in Nordasien*, ed. Eva-Maria Stolberg (Münster: Lit. 2007), 104–134, 110–111.

³⁹ Cf. the reproduction in Olaus Magnus, *Die Wunder des Nordens*, eds. Elena Balzamo and Reinhard Kaiser (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn Verlag, 2006), 58–59.

(Rome, 1555).⁴⁰ The *Carta Marina* is a famous map displaying Scandinavia, the British Isles, Iceland, the southern shores of the North and Baltic seas, and the western parts of Muscovy.⁴¹ In particular the *Carta Marina* is known for an astonishing abundance of illustrations and their hidden religious messages, which Olaus Magnus encoded by using exegetical practices, like the four senses of scripture.⁴² The illustration in question was fitted into a section of the map depicting northern Scandinavia. This area was a traditional habitat of the Sami. As a Swedish cleric and humanist, Olaus Magnus was well aware of the pagan past and heritage in remote regions in the North, which he knew from a long journey through Sweden in 1518. He described some of those remains and “superstitious” practices in his works.⁴³ Like his contemporaries, Olaus Magnus cited texts from other authors in his works and transferred some illustrations from different contexts. But he was also well-known for presenting a great

⁴⁰ Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1555; reprint: Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1972), 98–99, for an English translation cf. Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus. Romae 1555. Description of the Northern Peoples*, 3 vols., ed. Peter Foote, trans. Peter Fisher and Humphrey Higgens (London: Hakluyt Society, 1996–1998), vol. 1, 149–151.

⁴¹ Ulla Ehrensvärd, “The Swedish Mapping of Russia: Mutual Influence,” in *In Search of an Order: Mutual Representations in Sweden and Russia during the Early Age of Reason*, eds. Birgegård Ulla and Irina Sandomirskaja (Södertörn: Södertörns högskola, 2004), 21–49, 21–22; for information on Muscovy, cf. Elena A. Savel’eva, *Olaus Magnus i ego “Istorija severnych narodov”* [Olaus Magnus and his *Description of the Northern Peoples*] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1983), 45–51.

⁴² Elfriede Regina Knauer, *Die Carta Marina des Olaus Magnus von 1539. Ein kartographisches Meisterwerk und seine Wirkung* [The *Carta Marina* of Olaus Magnus (1539). A cartographical masterpiece and its impact] (Göttingen: Gratia-Verlag, 1981), 41–47; Maike Sach, “Kartographie als Verlustbeschreibung und Appell: Die *Carta Marina* des Olaus Magnus von 1539 als Beitrag im Ringen um die Einheit der Kirche” [Cartography as a loss description and appeal. The *Carta Marina* of Olaus Magnus (1539) as a contribution in the struggle for the unity of the church], in *Aufsicht—Ansicht—Einsicht. Neue Perspektiven auf die Kartographie an der Schwelle zur Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Tanja Michalsky, Felicitas Schmieder, and Gisela Engel (Berlin: trafo-Verlag, 2009), 197–225, 214–220.

⁴³ Magnus, *Historia*, 98–99; Magnus, *Die Wunder des Nordens*, 58–59. On the route of Olaus Magnus cf. Hjalmar Grape, “*Carta Marina* som Resejournal” [The *Carta Marina* as a travel account]. *Norbotten. Årsbok* 1971, Luleå 1970: 89–128; Ulla Ehrensvärd, “Zum zeitgeschichtlichen Hintergrund der *Carta Marina*. Ein Beitrag zum Werk der Brüder Johannes und Olaus Magnus” [On the contemporary history of the *Carta Marina*. A contribution to the opus of the brothers Johannes and Olaus Magnus], in *Das Danewerk in der Kartographiegeschichte Nordeuropas*, eds. Dagmar Unverhau and Kurt Schietzel (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1993), 11–20, 18.

deal of original material engraved according to the specifications of Olaus Magnus himself.⁴⁴

To return to Jenkinson's map: the vignette depicting rag veneration was used there in its original meaning to illustrate worship among northern peoples. But the concrete form of worship and its visualization were attributed to a group living east of the people originally portrayed in Olaus Magnus's works. Therefore non-European, non-Christian religious (and for this reason also cultural) traditions were interpreted in terms already formed and coded to denote religious difference. Other early modern maps showing Siberia or parts of it were less illustrated than Jenkinson's map. Ortelius also included another map displaying Siberia in his atlas entitled *Tartariae sive Magni chami regni typus*.⁴⁵ This map is topographically not very exact, but it contains the names of various indigenous peoples. The names were fitted on the map precisely on those areas where they were supposed to live. Settlements were indicated with little stereotyped symbols of cities or tents for nomadic peoples.⁴⁶ The grand duke of Muscovy and a Tatar khan were depicted in stereotyped allegorical vignettes symbolizing rulership. The remaining blanks on the map were filled with Latin commentaries mentioning and updating medieval historical legends like the kingdom of Prester John.⁴⁷ Differences concerning the density of geographic and ethnographic information can also be found on the map of Muscovy and its northern and eastern parts, composed by Isaac Massa at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It appeared in successive editions of Joan Blaeu's atlas from 1640 on.⁴⁸ References to medieval historical tradition also made their way into a map especially devoted to *Tataria sive Magni Chami imperium*,⁴⁹ which was included by Joan

⁴⁴ Balzamo and Kaiser, Commentary to Magnus, *Die Wunder des Nordens*, 343; Peter Gillgren, "The Artist Olaus Magnus: Vision and Illustration," in *I fratelli Giovanni e Olao Magno. Opera e cultura tra due mondi. Atti del Convegno Internazionale Roma-Farfa*, ed. Carlo Santini (Rome: Ed. il Calamo, 1999), 147–155.

⁴⁵ Ortelius, *Theatrum*, 104–105.

⁴⁶ Catherine Delano Smith, "Cartographic Signs in European Maps and their Explanations before 1700," *Imago mundi* 37 (1985): 9–29.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ortelius, *Theatrum*, 105; on Prester John: Felicitas Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert* [Europe and the foreigners. The Mongols in the eyes of the West from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries] (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1994), 248–251.

⁴⁸ Cf. Joan Blaeu, *Atlas Maior of 1665*, ed. Peter van der Krogt (Cologne: Taschen, 2005), 115, 577; on Massa Bagrow, see *A History of Russian Cartography up to 1800*, 51–52, 62–64.

⁴⁹ Blaeu, *Atlas Maior of 1665*, 516–517.

Blaeu, too. The map itself does not possess many illustrations. Indigenous peoples are only mentioned but not visualized. The only interesting illustration with more religious than ethnographic content is a group of little demons and devils flying and dancing in Mongolian deserts, symbolizing superstition.⁵⁰

It seems that Isaac Massa also used some geographical information from Russians. In Muscovy topographical information on Siberia was gathered by members of the local administration, Cossacks or Russian merchants, but they were not allowed to pass that data on to foreigners, who normally were not allowed access to Siberia. The Russian tsars were well aware of the importance of good maps for control and administration purposes, so they were interested in mapping their area, too.⁵¹ Important Western atlases found their way to Moscow and were translated and used for Russian cartographic production. Until the end of the seventeenth century, the mapping of Siberia remained rudimentary, except for some peninsulas like Kamchatka and Chukotka. Occasional travel accounts of Western or Russian envoys and merchants like Eberhard Isbrand Ides, Adam Brand, Nicolaes Witsen, or Nikolai Gavrilovich Spafarii on their way to China or Persia and the collecting of geographical data up until this time were more or less unsystematic.⁵² A systematic description and scientific documentation of Siberia was an enormous project not attempted until the reign of Peter the Great.

The Beginnings of a Systematic Exploration of Indigenous Peoples and the Role and Meaning of the Visual for Research Practices

As an eager learner during his famous great journey through Western Europe (1697–1698), Peter I became well aware of the need to know more about his own empire in order to exploit its natural wealth more efficiently to strengthen its power for the future. Thus Siberia and its adjacent re-

⁵⁰ Ibid., 517.

⁵¹ Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 106–107; Valerie A. Kivelson, “‘Between All Parts of the Universe’: Russian Cosmographies and Imperial Strategies in Early Modern Siberia and Ukraine,” *Imago mundi* 60 (2008): 166–181, 167–168; Leo Bagrow, “The First Russian Maps of Siberia and their Influence on West-European Cartography of N.E. Asia,” *Imago mundi* 9 (1952): 83–93, 88.

⁵² Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 106–110; Bagrow, *A History of Russian Cartography up to 1800*, 64–80; Bagrow, “The First Russian Maps of Siberia,” 84–93; Kivelson, “Between All Parts of the Universe,” 168–173.

gions came into focus as a great source of natural resources. But it took more than two decades before an expedition (1720–1727) was on its way, the first to be organized exclusively for gathering information and not mainly for diplomatic negotiations or trade. As Gudrun Bucher rightly pointed out, this new approach was a paradigm shift in the history of exploring Siberia.⁵³ Due to a lack of Russian specialists, numerous European scholars, especially Germans, participated in those eighteenth-century expeditions. They also contributed their services to the Imperial Academy of Sciences, founded in 1724 and officially opened in 1725, as a Russian complement to Western models. Throughout the century the Academy had to coordinate expeditions including the participation of foreign specialists and was interested in sending its own scholars to take part, as well as Russian students to be trained.⁵⁴ It is also worth noting that it was the exploration of Siberia and Siberian peoples in the eighteenth century that prepared the ground for the development of ethnography as a distinct scientific discipline, long before it was institutionalized and implemented in the organizational structure of European learned societies, museums, and universities in the nineteenth century.⁵⁵

The first expedition, marking the start of a large and ambitious research program, which was to be continued by Peter's successors during the eighteenth century, was conducted by Daniel Gottlieb

⁵³ Gudrun Bucher, "The Development of Research Practices during the Eighteenth Century and Their Impact on the Study of the Non-Russian Peoples of Siberia in the Nineteenth Century," in *Defining Self: Essays on Emergent Identities in Russia, Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Branch (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2009), 47–58, 47; generally cf. Erich Donnert, "Russische Entdeckungsreisen und Forschungsexpeditionen in den Stillen Ozean im 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhundert" [Russian expeditions in the Pacific in the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries], in Erich Donnert, ed., *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit. Festschrift für Günter Mühlpfordt*, vol. 6 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002), 837–872.

⁵⁴ Cf. Dittmar Dahlmann, Introduction to Johann Georg Gmelin, *Expedition ins unbekannte Sibirien*, ed. Dittmar Dahlmann (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1999), 7–84, 15–19; Erich Donnert, "Kultur und Wissenschaften im Reformwerk Peters des Großen" [Culture and sciences in the reforms of Peter the Great], in *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit. Festschrift für Günter Mühlpfordt*, vol. 7, ed. Erich Donnert (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 685–696, 693; Bucher, "The Development of Research Practices," 47.

⁵⁵ Han F. Vermeulen, "Ethnographie und Ethnologie in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Völker-Beschreibung und Völkerkunde in Russland, Deutschland und Österreich (1740–1845)" [Ethnography and ethnology in Central and Eastern Europe. The description of peoples and ethnology in Russia, Germany, and Austria (1740–1845)] in Donnert, ed., *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 6, 397–409.

Messerschmidt.⁵⁶ Messerschmidt, a German naturalist-cum-physician, well acquainted with various currents of the German Enlightenment, traveled through Siberia accompanied only by a servant and some soldiers.⁵⁷ For a while Johann Philipp Tabbert von Strahlenberg joined the excursion. Though a talented geographer, as a former Swedish officer and prisoner of war he was no trained scientist.⁵⁸ Relying mainly on his own labors, Messerschmidt was nevertheless able to collect an amazingly large amount of data from very different fields of knowledge, mirroring the contemporary integral approach of systematical recording and classifying. Thus he was interested in botany and zoology, mineralogy, and climate and studied the peoples of Siberia, their mode of living, and their languages. His observations were not published in his lifetime, but his notes and his rich collections of data, objects, and artifacts were analyzed by later explorers in the preparation of subsequent expeditions in the eighteenth century.⁵⁹

Messerschmidt's fundamental strategies of visualization included collecting objects to be sent to the *Kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg, the first Russian museum for *naturalia* and *artificialia*,⁶⁰ and sketching all objects

⁵⁶ Cf. Messerschmidt's journals, which he kept during his travels: D.G. Messerschmidt, *Forschungsreise durch Sibirien, 1720–1727* [Expedition through Siberia, 1720–1727], vols. 1–5, ed. E. Winter et al. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962–1977), the edition remained incomplete. Cf. also Marita Hübner, "Christliche Aufklärung und Staatsinteresse im Spiegel der Forschungsreise von Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt (1685–1735) nach Sibirien in den Jahren 1720–1727" [Christian Enlightenment and public interest in the expedition of Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt (1685–1735) to Siberia 1720–1727], in Donnert, ed., *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 7, 697–711; Hendrik Frederik Vermeulen, *Early History of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment: Anthropological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1710–1808* (Leiden: Ridderprint, 2008), 85–97.

⁵⁷ Bucher, "Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker," 65–66; E. Winter and A.N. Figurovskij, Introduction to Messerschmidt, *Forschungsreise*, vol. 1, 16–18; Johann Georg Gmelin, *Expedition ins unbekannte Sibirien* [Expedition into the unknown Siberia], ed. Dittmar Dahlmann (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1999), 93–94; Vermeulen, *Early History*, 63; Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 114–115.

⁵⁸ Vermeulen, *Early History*, 89–90.

⁵⁹ Bucher, "Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker," 65–66; Vermeulen, *Early History*, 63; Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 114–115.

⁶⁰ Donnert, "Kultur und Wissenschaften," 693–694; Vermeulen, *Early History*, 42–45; great parts of the early collections were lost in a 1747 fire: *ibid.*, 120. A distinct scientific museum for anthropology and ethnology was founded in the second half of the nineteenth century: E. Iu. Basargina, *Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk na rubezhe XIX–XX vekov. Oчерki istorii* [The Imperial Academy of Sciences at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Historical outlines] (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), 291–293.

and scenes of interest himself. During his travels he sketched various kinds, of tombstones, petroglyphs, statues, and steles, but also of characteristic tattoos in schematized faces or different findings evincing human presence in Siberia, likewise mentioned in his notes.⁶¹ Often those sketches complemented descriptions in his diary. For instance, in a journal entry dated September 30, 1725, Messerschmidt described several objects bought from an Ostyak. He listed names used by the indigenous people to define the artifacts, identified the materials they were made of, carefully noted their colors, and described their general appearance. Messerschmidt also mentioned the complex ornaments of a shoe in his journal. For a better understanding, for documentation purposes, and especially to capture the essence, he drew a little sketch explicitly referred to in the text.⁶² Apparently his ambition was to present in every way a precise textual and pictorial representation true to nature, not simply an embellishment of his text.

Johann Georg Gmelin, one of Messerschmidt's successors, praised his work but also regretted that Messerschmidt had to conduct research without any assistance from either an illustrator or a painter.⁶³ The following expeditions during the eighteenth century were organized as larger enterprises, including more equipment and staff: Vitus Jonassen Bering, a Danish navigator with a long record of service in the Russian navy, conducted the First Kamchatka Expedition (1725–1730) in search of a land bridge between Siberia and North America. No evidence has been found that ethnographic data or artifacts were collected during this journey, supervised by the Admiralty and the Senate.⁶⁴ To meet topographical and naval needs and demands, maps were drawn during this expedition. They already show a shift in representation strategies, especially compared with the older maps mentioned above: in general the new maps display more topographical data; a possible *horror vacui* owing to a lack of knowledge was to be filled with new empirical information or topographical data. Pictures were inserted to a far lesser extent into maps or integrated only into frames, sometimes even reduced to topographical signs and symbols, mirroring the development of cartographic conventions.⁶⁵ Illustrations

⁶¹ Cf. Messerschmidt, *Forschungsreise*, vol. 1, figs. 1–9; vol. 2, figs. 10, 13; vol. 3, fig. 40.

⁶² Messerschmidt, *Forschungsreise*, vol. 4, 244, cf. also fig. 50.

⁶³ Gmelin, *Expedition*, 93–94.

⁶⁴ Vermeulen, *Early History*, 104–105; cf. also Dahlmann, Introduction to Gmelin, *Expedition*, 26–32.

⁶⁵ Giulia Cecere, “Wo Europa endet. Die Grenze zwischen Europa und Asien im 18. Jahrhundert” [Where Europe ends. The frontier between Europe and Asia in the eighteenth

with ethnographic content no longer served as filler on maps. An interesting but rare exception, albeit proving the rule, is the unsigned map of a junior officer, most probably drawn by the midshipman Petr Avramovich Chaplin, a member of Bering's crew. In this map a set of ethnographic illustrations was combined with a cartographical representation of newly gathered or verified topographical information.⁶⁶

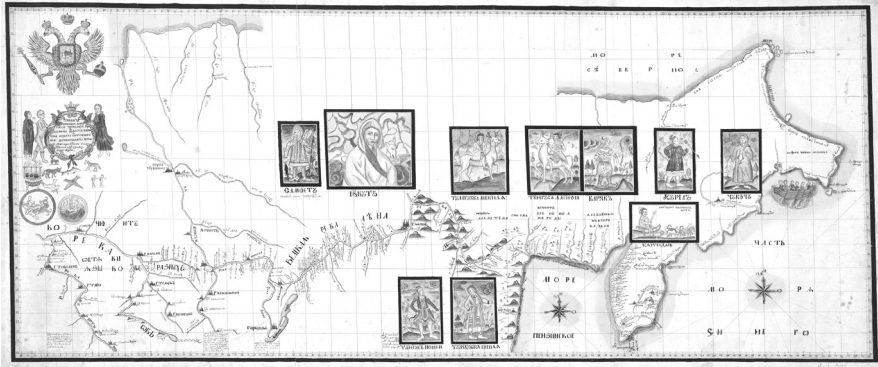


Fig. 1. Petr Avramovich Chaplin. Map of Siberia and the itinerary of the First Kamchatka Expedition (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen)

The map reproduced here is one of several slightly varying copies primarily forwarded by Bering as an appendix to a report to the Admiralty. Later it belonged to Baron Georg Thomas von Asch, a German physician in Russian military and civil service during the reign of Catherine II, who regularly corresponded with a wide range of German and Russian authors and scholars.⁶⁷ The degree of detail on the map is uneven. While there is

century], in *Kartenwelten. Der Raum und seine Repräsentation in der Neuzeit*, eds. Christof Dipper and Ute Schneider (Darmstadt: Primus-Verlag, 2006), 127–145, 131, cf. also the reproductions no. 13–15 displaying maps of Guillaume Delisle, Iwan Kirillov, and Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg in Bagrow, *A History of Russian Cartography up to 1800*, 157–163.

⁶⁶ Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, Sammlung Asch (Cod. Ms. Asch 246); Wieland Hintzsche and Thomas Nickol, eds., *Monumenta Sibiriae. Quellen zur Geschichte Sibiriens und Alaskas aus russischen Archiven* [Monumenta Sibiriae. Sources from Russian archives on the history of Siberia and Alaska] (Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1996), No. 1.

⁶⁷ Hintzsche and Nickol, Commentary to *Monumenta Sibiriae*, 7; Leo Bagrow, "The Vitus Bering First Voyage Maps," *Geografisk Tidsskrift* 49 (1948–49): 32–40. On Asch, see Arnold Buchholz, "Die Rußlandsammlung des Barons von Asch" [The Russian collec-

densely verified topographical information for the route and the distances covered by the expedition, some topography of the continent's interior is left blank, and coastal lines in the North are uncertain or missing. Chaplin did not carry forward old assumptions or simply invent missing geographical data. Nevertheless, he filled empty space on his map in a very traditional way: in two rows he inserted ten framed illustrations of members of nomadic and non-nomadic indigenous peoples living along the expedition's route, all depicted in traditional costumes, carrying artifacts obviously perceived as typical. Some of those portrayed are accompanied by domestic animals, horses and reindeer, or prey animals. On the left frame, beneath two illustrations displaying the Russian national coat of arms and the title of the map inserted in a vignette held by two Russians and a naked "savage," there are illustrations of animals of importance to Siberian peoples. The map also shows items of daily use, obviously regarded as characteristic and worthy of visualization. Furthermore, Chaplin drew a sketch of two burial scenes depicting burial rites differing from contemporary European Christian standards: cremation and exposing the corpse in the natural environment for animals, most likely dogs, to consume.⁶⁸

Chaplin's illustrations of representatives of some indigenous peoples along the route can be read as an ethnographic description of native and alien ways of life using a pictorial language based on his own observation and study. The images and formulas invented by Chaplin summarized his observations and reduced them for an immediate presentation in a medium of limited space like a map. The price Chaplin had to pay for this operation was a generalization of the presented knowledge, which at the same time made it less valuable for scientists looking for precise and differentiated information.⁶⁹ Beyond that, the illustrations on the left side of the map deal with highly coded cultural and religious differences manifested in burial rites. As Hendrik Vermeulen, Wieland Hintzsche, and Thomas Nickol

tion of Baron von Asch], *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 3 (1955): 123–140; Bucher, "Die Insel Kodiak," 40–41.

⁶⁸ Cf. Georg Wilhelm Steller, *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka, dessen Einwohnern, deren Sitten, Nahmen, Lebensart und verschiedenen Gewohnheiten* [Description of Kamchatka, its inhabitants, their manners, names, mode of living, and various customs], ed. J[ean] B[enoît] S[chérer], J[ean] B[enoît] (Frankfurt and Leipzig: Johann Georg Fleischer, 1774), 273, online: URL: <http://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?PPN330841254> (February 13, 2013).

⁶⁹ Already noted by Hintzsche and Nickol, eds., "Kommentar," in *Monumenta Sibiriae*, 7–8.

already stressed, Chaplin used cultural codes to construct a contrast between “savage” indigenous Siberians and “civilized” Christian peoples.⁷⁰

However, Chaplin’s map disseminated knowledge about the non-Russian peoples of Siberia and was also studied by later explorers preparing the Second Kamchatka Expedition, also known as the Great Northern Expedition (1733–1743).⁷¹ It was one of the greatest scientific enterprises in the eighteenth century and the most important expedition, exploring Siberia systematically and leading to the discovery of Alaska.⁷² The Russian government’s generous financing made possible the employment not only of scientific specialists of various disciplines from abroad organized in different independently operating teams, but also of research assistants, illustrators and painters, as well as of Russian students to be thoroughly trained in distinct fields of knowledge and in current associated research practices.⁷³

The participants of the expedition included such distinguished scientists as the naturalist Johann Georg Gmelin, the astronomer Louis de l’Isle de la Croyère, and the historian Gerhard Friedrich Müller, known for his contribution to the development of ethnography as an autonomous science with its own concept. During the travels Müller distinguished ethnography, or *Völker-Beschreibung* in his terminology, not yet defined as a discipline, from history, geography, statistics, or *historia naturalis*.⁷⁴ The development of his ideas, the influence of experiences during the expedition and practical fieldwork, can be retraced step by step in his extensive

⁷⁰ Vermeulen, *Early History*, 106; Hintzsche and Nickol, “Kommentar,” in *Monumenta Sibiriae*, 7–8.

⁷¹ Vermeulen, *Early History*, 106.

⁷² Donnert, “Forschungsexpeditionen,” 844–849; Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 118–128; Bucher, “Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker,” 18–32; Vermeulen, *Early History*, 106–116.

⁷³ Gmelin, *Expedition*, S. 99; also cited in Doris Posselt, ed., *Die Große Nordische Expedition von 1733 bis 1743. Aus Berichten der Forschungsreisenden Johann Georg Gmelin und Georg Wilhelm Steller* [The Great Northern Expedition 1733–1743. From reports of the explorers Johann Georg Gmelin and Georg Wilhelm Steller] (Leipzig and Weimar: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1990), 7. On students, their teachers, and their respective duties, see Wieland Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente zur 2. Kamčatkaexpedition. 1730–1733. Akademiegruppe* [Documents on the Second Kamchatka Expedition. 1730–1733. Study group of the Academy] (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2004), no. 107, 328–332; Donnert, “Forschungsexpeditionen,” 844.

⁷⁴ On the expedition, Gmelin, *Expedition*, S. 99; on Müller, especially Bucher, “Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker,” 33–42; Vermeulen, *Early History*, 100–104; on the development of terminology, *ibid.*, 10–20, 199–247; and Stagl, *Geschichte der Neugier*, 253–262.

instructions, drawn up as an ambitious research plan for the study of indigenous peoples and completing the general instructions of the Academy, dated July 5, 1733.⁷⁵ Over the years Müller composed several large catalogs of guiding questions for various scientists and students, defining or modifying fields of interest for study. In Müller's instructions the non-Russian peoples and their members appear as a research object like other items of curiosity to be measured, calibrated, charted, or classified from the fields of botany, zoology, or geography. To define the position of indigenous peoples in the general history of mankind, Müller also wrote up sets of questions concerning mode of living, language, culture, history, archaeology, and religion. The foreignness of observed phenomena or detected objects or differences from implicit European norms proved to be an important criterion for selection and further precise description and careful documentation.⁷⁶ If possible, interesting items, *naturalia* and *artificialia*, had to be collected systematically for documentation and sent regularly to the *Kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg; their function and use had to be noted or drawn.⁷⁷

Drawing during Expeditions: The Case of the Second Kamchatka Expedition

While preparing the Second Kamchatka Expedition, it was decided that a professional illustrator and an amanuensis should accompany the scientists dispatched by the Academy of Sciences to carry out documentation. The expedition was well equipped with material for drawing and painting, including a *camera obscura*, an up-to-date optical instrument to capture subtle details of items of various kinds and landscapes.⁷⁸ The general instructions of the Academy mention that the expedition's painter was to

⁷⁵ General instruction: Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 183, 485–490.

⁷⁶ Cf. the suggestions of the Academy of Sciences to the Senate concerning general scientific aims, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 7, 34–37; special instructions of the Academy, *ibid.*, no. 184. See also Müller's propositions for the adaption of the instructions, *ibid.*, no. 211, 574–575, 580–581. Bucher, "The Development of Research Practices," 47–51; Bucher, "*Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker*," 75–127; Vermeulen, *Early History*, 124–130.

⁷⁷ Bucher, "*Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker*," 124–126.

⁷⁸ Catalog of materials, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 61, 208–215; Ukaz of the Academy, *ibid.*, no. 189, 519–520; on the use of the *camera obscura*, cf. also Daston and Galison, *Objektivität*, 82–83.

carry out his tasks according to the request of the scientists, the professorate, and according to the method dictated by the Academy's painter. Likewise, this was also expected from the amanuensis.⁷⁹ The Swiss Georg Gsell, who had lived in St. Petersburg since 1716 and worked there at the *Kunstkamera* as a drawing teacher, later as the painter of the Academy, drew up the guidelines for the artist accompanying the scientists. He also helped prepare the students chosen to join the expedition to engage in study.⁸⁰ Among those students was the talented Stepan Petrovich Krasheninnikov, who was sent by Steller to Kamchatka for ethnological and zoological research. Later on he became a professor at the Moscow University.⁸¹ To make good use of the time before the July 1733 departure and with regard to the contents and aims of the expedition, the students received special lessons in geography, languages, the history of nature, and also in drawing by Gsell himself.⁸²

The special instructions for painters from July 7, 1733, drafted in German, later translated into Latin, consist of a ten-paragraph document mainly dealing with how to draw landscapes, how to depict the features of various species of animals, herbs, or other plants and also how to preserve them, and how to draw minerals with special regard to the needs of future engraving. The instructions also mention which items are worth studying and how to look at them. The painters were advised to work diligently and carefully, and they were admonished to note measures of depicted items. Quite interesting is a remark concerning the documentation of the painter's own artistic work: they were instructed to keep a special diary to note all that has had to be drawn and to comment on noteworthy characteristics and peculiarities of their own profession.⁸³ These notes can be regarded as pictorial diaries completing the journals of the scientist, as Philippe Despoix has argued in analyzing different types of documenta-

⁷⁹ General instruction, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 183, 486.

⁸⁰ Instructions for the painters, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 192, 523–530; see also *donoshenie* of the Academy, *ibid.*, no. 60, 205–207; on Gsell: Bucher, “*Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker*,” 121, 252.

⁸¹ Gmelin, *Expedition*, 102; Instruction of Steller for Krasheninnikov, Georg Wilhelm Steller, *Briefe und Dokumente. 1740* [Letters and documents. 1740], eds. Wieland Hintzsche et al. (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2000), no. 163, 313–315; Donnert, “Forschungsexpeditionen,” 846; Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 129.

⁸² Letter to Gsell from the Academy, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 58, 203; cf. also *donoshenie* from the Academy, *ibid.*, no. 60, 206.

⁸³ Special instructions for painters, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 192, 523–530, cf. also 529, note 2; Bucher, “*Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker*,” 120–124.

tion during expeditions.⁸⁴ The guidelines for adequate depicting of landscapes are striking from an epistemic point of view, too: the sketches had to be drawn according to the natural model, but not to be aesthetically pleasing. In fact, the description of patterns and characteristics of the landscapes, including human settlements, was favored. It seems that preference was given to a clear distinction between quality attributes rather than to an exact representation of the natural model.⁸⁵ As a consequence those sketches of landscapes were something “between an exact copy and a stylized synthetic product of artwork,” as Gudrun Bucher rightly noted.⁸⁶ Based on their analysis of scientific images, especially in botanical atlases, Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison revealed the complex processes between subjects and objects of science and how images shaped the observing subject as well as the observed objects, due to rivaling epistemic concepts like idealizing an image to catch the essentials in the name of truth-to-nature, or highlighting characteristics or patterns in the name of trained judgment, or erasing secondary details in the name of objectivity.⁸⁷ In particular, the guidelines for picturing landscapes formulated in the instructions for painters joining the Great Northern Expedition reflect problems of epistemology. But other parts of the instructions also provide a notion of how observation (and documentation) could have been carried out not by an individual but as a collaboration of members of a scientific community and its professional requirements.

However, the special instructions for painters did not include detailed guidelines on how to capture ethnographic items. Gudrun Bucher argues that Müller probably only managed to convince the Academy to picture *ethnographica* after the expedition was already on its way and had reached the destination areas.⁸⁸ Thus only the special instructions shed some light on the directives given to the professorates: various artifacts like ruins, historical monuments, all kinds of old and new vessels, idols, and views of settlements were to be depicted. Beyond that some of the smaller items were to be transported to St. Petersburg. Men and women of all indigenous peoples were to be painstakingly drawn in their daily costumes in order to capture the characteristics of the particular peoples in look and stature. Moreover, examples of each piece of clothing were to be

⁸⁴ Despoix, *Die Welt vermessen*, 84–85.

⁸⁵ Special instructions for painters, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 192, 523.

⁸⁶ Bucher, “*Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker*,” 122.

⁸⁷ Daston and Galison, *Objektivität*, 45–55, 88–113, 437–39.

⁸⁸ Bucher, “*Von Beschreibung und Sitten der Gebräuche und Völker*,” 122.

collected and sent to the capital.⁸⁹ The emphasis on costume reflects traditional conventions in displaying non-European peoples and their updating for scientific purposes. To quote Rüdiger Joppien and Bernard Smith from their analysis of the drawings of Captain Cook's voyages in a historical perspective, which also compared pieces of Hellenistic and Roman art: "Its history [i.e., the history of ethnographic convention, M.S.] may also be traced to classical roots. [...] the *Dying Gaul* makes no use of landscape attributes. He is defined as a Gaul by his wild hair, his moustache and the torque about his neck. This is the nature of ethnographic convention. It defines by means of costume and adornment, and is present in Western art from Hellenistic times onwards, wherever the foreigner needs to be specified."⁹⁰

The Academy commissioned well-reputed persons for the pictorial and documentary tasks: the painter Johann Christian Berckhan, formerly employed as graphic artist at the *Kunstkamera*, and Johann Wilhelm Lürsenius, who worked as an amanuensis in the Academy for several years.⁹¹ Lürsenius, often referred to as an illustrator in various lists, bills, and documents, was to make copies and also to carry out sketches.⁹² Some years after the departure of the Academy's team, the name of a certain Johann Cornelius Decker, working as an illustrator and painter, appears in the papers of the expedition.⁹³ Whether the painters and illustrators understood the instructions for painters is unknown. Müller was well aware that they did not read Latin, and he himself did not know for sure whether they received a German version of the text considered useful for scientific beginners.⁹⁴ Though Berckhan and Lürsenius were no trained scientists, they were familiar with various conventions of European art that were an integral part of professional artistic training and education.⁹⁵ It took some

⁸⁹ Special instructions for scientists, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 184, 499.

⁹⁰ Rüdiger Joppien and Bernard Smith, *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages*, vol. 1: *The Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768–1771* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 6.

⁹¹ Gmelin, *Expedition*, 102; Ukaz of the Senate of the Academy, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 86, 270; *donoshenie* of Müller, *ibid.*, no. 70, 239–240, 239.

⁹² Ukaz of the Senate of the Academy, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 86, 270.

⁹³ Command of Müller and Gmelin to Berckhan, Decker, and Lürsenius, in Georg Wilhelm Steller, *Briefe und Dokumente. 1739* [Letters and documents. 1739], ed. Wieland Hintzsche et al. (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2001), no. 15, 57; notes from Gmelin's diary, *ibid.*, no. 36, 115.

⁹⁴ Müller quoted in Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 192, 529, note 2.

⁹⁵ Sandra Mühlenberend, "Künstlerausbildung im 18. Jahrhundert: Antikenstudium und anatomische Modelle an Kunstakademien" [The education of artists in the eighteenth

time until the results of the expedition were published, including engravings on the base of the sketches, drawings, and watercolors done by painters and also by students. Although participants were sworn to secrecy to enable the Academy in St. Petersburg to be the first to publish the expedition's results, some information leaked into the European network of scientists, who were acquainted personally or at least corresponded with each other, and also found its way into journals.⁹⁶ Various bureaucratic and legal difficulties, as well as controversies within the Academy itself, impeded the rapid publication of documentation and analyses.⁹⁷ Thus some official reports from the Great Northern Expedition appeared in print for the first time only after the death of their authors.

Illustrations in Publications

One of those posthumously published official reports was the *Opisanie zemli Kamchatki*,⁹⁸ the description of Kamchatka, by Stepan P. Krasheninnikov on the basis of his own notes and the records of Steller, who had died in 1746.⁹⁹ After several years of work on various drafts,

century. The role of studies of antiquity and anatomical models in academies of fine arts], in *Kunst und Aufklärung im 18. Jahrhundert. Kunstausbildung der Akademien, Kunstvermittlung der Fürsten, Kunstsammlung der Universität. Gesamtkatalog der Ausstellungen in Halle, Stendal und Wörlitz* (Ruhpolding: Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2005), 71–74, comments and catalog, *ibid.*, 75–100.

⁹⁶ On secrecy: General instructions, Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, no. 183, 485; see also Dahlmann, Introduction to Gmelin, *Expedition*, 56–57; Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 133; Donnert, “Forschungsexpeditionen,” 848; on the dissemination of observations and results, cf. Peter Hoffmann, “Anton Friedrich Büsching und Rußland” [Anton Friedrich Büsching and Russia], in *Die Kenntnis Rußlands im deutschsprachigen Raum im 18. Jahrhundert. Wissenschaft und Publizistik über das Russische Reich*, ed. Dittmar Dahlmann (Bonn: V & R unipress, Bonn University Press, 2006), 69–83; Gudrun Bucher, “Auf verschlungenen Pfaden. Die Aufnahme von Gerhard Friedrich Müllers Schriften in Europa” [On intricate paths. The reception of the works of Gerhard Friedrich Müller in Europe], in *ibid.*, 111–123.

⁹⁷ Dahlmann, *Sibirien*, 133; Donnert, “Forschungsexpeditionen,” 848.

⁹⁸ Stepan P. Krasheninnikov, *Opisane zemli Kamchatki* [Description of Kamchatka], 2 vols. (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia nauk, 1755), URL <http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN33096285X&DMDID=dmdlog2> (February 13, 2013).

⁹⁹ Bucher, “Von Beschreibung der Sitten und Gebräuche der Völker,” 161. Steller's own report appeared in 1774 and resembles Krasheninnikov's *Opisanie* due to close cooperation: Bucher, “Wahrnehmung und Beschreibung des Schamanismus durch Gelehrte des 18. Jahrhunderts,” 126.

Krasheninnikov was able to finish the manuscript, but he himself died in 1755 before the publication of his text, which was finally edited by Müller. Due to an overwhelming Russian interest in those distant parts of the empire, previously almost unknown even in Russia itself, the *Opisanie* was one of the few official reports that appeared in the first years after the expedition.¹⁰⁰ The book describing the Kamchatka Peninsula and the Itelmens and Koryaks as indigenous inhabitants included some maps and illustrations. The engravings dealing with ethnographic matters reflect guiding questions from the instructions dealing with *historia gentium*: the appearance of indigenous peoples, of members of both sexes, the look of their costumes, dwellings, scenes of economic and daily life, sometimes annotated directly to avoid misunderstandings (figs. 2–4).



Fig. 2. Kamchadal in winter dress, Krasheninnikov, *Opisanie zemli Kamchatki* (1755), 43 (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen)

¹⁰⁰ Bucher, "Von Beschreibung der Sitten und Gebräuche der Völker," 161.

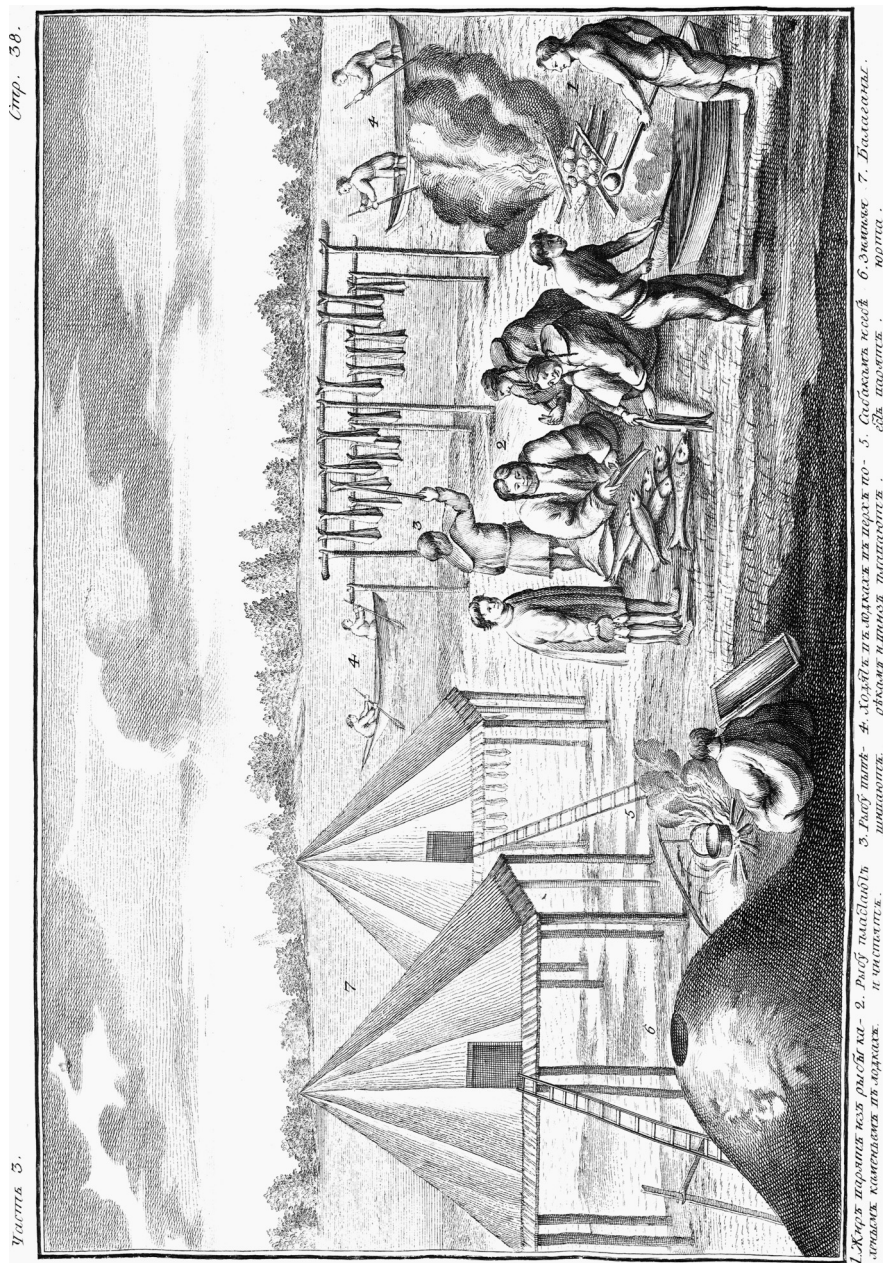


Fig. 3. Various activities, Krasheninnikov, *Opisanie zemli Kamchatki* (1755), 38
(Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen)

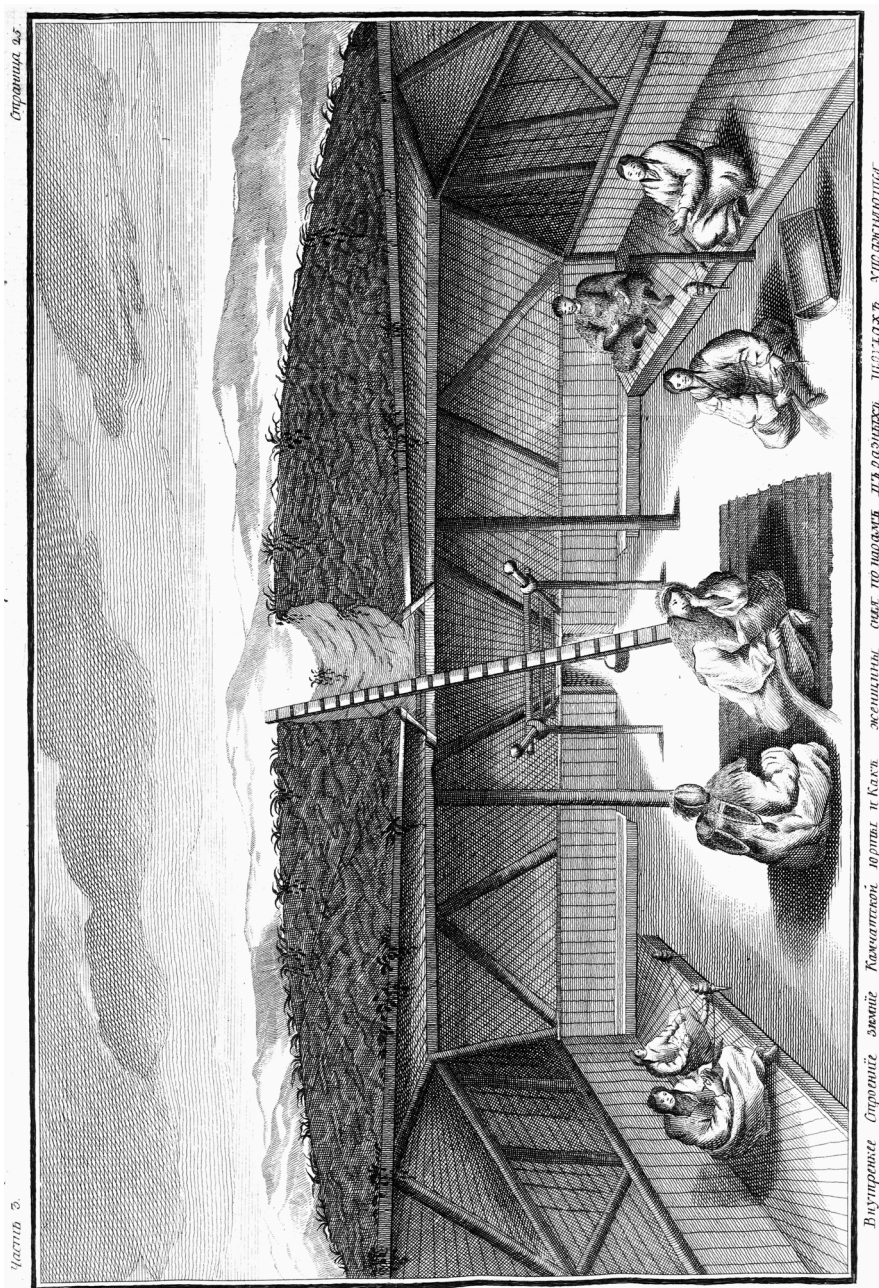


Fig. 4. Interior of a winter yurt, Krasheninnikov, *Opisanie zemli Kamchatki* (1755), 25 (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen)

The public in Western Europe seemed quite interested in Krashennikov's *Opisanie* as well. The information on the hitherto unknown Itelmens and Koryaks, the "savage" Kamchadals, their "scandalous" mode of living *in statu naturali* including promiscuity, and polygamy, but also a rich mythology, natural religious practices and a shamanism differing from already observed forms in Western Siberia, were fascinating for a European public eager to hear about "superstitious" and "blasphemous" rites, about an unconceivable, but apparently happy "uncivilized" people of "non-believers" and idolators.¹⁰¹ Beyond that the new empirical information from Kamchatka contradicted current historical and philosophical theories of the history of reason, culture and religion based on the study of European antiquity. Thus its adherents tried to explain some cultural and religious phenomena diverging from European norms and patterns of historical development as results of indigenous peoples' vivid imagination.¹⁰² In 1774 Steller's description of Kamchatka appeared. Together with Krashennikov's book, Steller's report initiated theoretical discourses, above all in German enlightened and academic circles, on the development of human civilization in general and on the "savage" Kamchadals in particular.¹⁰³ Those attempts to systematize the explorer's observations and to reconcile them with enlightened historical and philosophical theories were to perceive the development of Kamchadal indigenous peoples as a historical and cultural exception.¹⁰⁴

Relatively soon after its appearance in St. Petersburg, the *Opisanie* was abridged and translated rather loosely into English by James Grieve. Only some of the illustrations of the Russian original were adopted, slightly varied.¹⁰⁵ The first German and French editions were based on Grieve's

¹⁰¹ An outline is provided in Bucher, "Wahrnehmung und Beschreibung des Schamanismus," 112–133.

¹⁰² Lucas Mario Gisi, *Einbildungskraft und Mythologie. Die Verschränkung von Anthropologie und Geschichte im 18. Jahrhundert* [Imagination and mythology. The interrelation of anthropology and history in the eighteenth century] (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 235–246.

¹⁰³ On those discussions and on the reception of both reports on Kamchatka in German enlightened and pietistic circles in detail: Lucas Mario Gisi, "Die lebhafteste Einbildungskraft der 'Wilden' Kamtschatkas als europäisches Konstrukt und außereuropäische Herausforderung" [The animated imagination of the "savages" of Kamchatka as European construct and non-European provocation], in *Kulturen des Wissens im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ulrich Johannes Schneider (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 399–406; Gisi, *Einbildungskraft und Mythologie*, 246–268.

¹⁰⁴ Gisi, "Die lebhafteste Einbildungskraft," 405.

¹⁰⁵ [Stephen Krashennicoff], *The History of Kamtschatka and the Kurilski Islands, with the Countries Adjacent; Illustrated with Maps and Cuts*, trans. James Grieve

text. It is not clear whether they also reproduced illustrations directly from Grieve's edition.¹⁰⁶ The number of illustrations reproduced in rather expensive editions grew during the second half of the eighteenth century. Illustrations were announced on titles and also especially mentioned in forewords as important for understanding the text. Comments were made concerning the engravers and artists involved in the production of pictures and engravings.¹⁰⁷ This was also the case in Abbé Jean Chappe d'Auteroche's famous *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), which used illustrations mainly for the visualization of his own ideas.¹⁰⁸

Chappe d'Auteroche, a member of the French Academy of Sciences, traveled to Siberia in summer 1761 to observe a rare astronomical event and to take various measurements.¹⁰⁹ Nowadays he is known primarily for his critical description of the Russian Empire, the system of serfdom, corruption, and the "barbarous subjects" of the Russian tsarina Elizaveta Petrovna, mixing his own impressions from his journey with stereotypes and clichés from other sources.¹¹⁰ His book was a success, satisfying both the

(Glocester: R. Raikes, 1764), URL: <http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN330822152&DMDID=dmdlog3> (February 13, 2013).

¹⁰⁶ Stephan Krascheninnikov, *Opisanie zemli Kamtschatki, d. i. Beschreibung des Landes Kamtschatka ... in einem Auszuge in englischer Sprache bekannt gemacht von Jacob Grieve ...* [Opisanie zemli Kamtschatki, that is the description of Kamchatka ... published in an abridged version in English by James Grieve ...], trans. Johann Tobias Köhler (Lemgo: Meyer, 1766); [Etienne Krasheninicoff], *Histoire de Kamtschatka, des Isles Kurilski, et des contrées voisines* (History of Kamchatka, of the Kuril Islands and the neighboring areas), trans. M[arc] E[idous] (Lyon: Duplain, 1767). Those editions were not available to me. A critical review of editions and various translations is in Bucher, "Von Beschreibung der Sitten und Gebräuche der Völker," 162, cf. also note 543; Gisi, *Einbildungskraft und Mythologie*, 249–250.

¹⁰⁷ Despoix, *Die Welt vermessen*, 103–106.

¹⁰⁸ Jean Chappe d'Auteroche, *Voyage en Sibérie, fait par ordre du roi ...* [Journey through Siberia by command of the King ...] (Paris: Debure, 1768) URL: <http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN, vol. 1, No. 16334025672&DMDID=dmdlog4> (February 13, 2013). The Chappe d'Auteroche text was newly edited twice: Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, ed. *L'Impératrice et l'Abbé. Un duel littéraire inédit entre Catherine II et l'Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 67–323; Michel Mervaud, ed., *Chappe d'Auteroche. Voyage en Sibérie fait par ordre du roi en 1761*, vol. 1: *Introduction et apparat critique*; vol. 2: *Édition critique* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004).

¹⁰⁹ Michel Mervaud, "Introduction: Jean Chappe d'Auteroche, savant et voyageur au siècle des Lumières" [Introduction: Jean Chappe d'Auteroche, scientist and traveler of the Age of Enlightenment] in Mervaud, ed., *Voyages en Sibérie*, vol. 1, 2–122, 6–20.

¹¹⁰ Mervaud, "Introduction," 45–49; Gert Robel, "Russische Reiseberichte über Deutschland und deutsche Reiseberichte über Russland" [Russian travelogues through Germany

curiosity of a Western European public and the desire for coverage of “exotic” themes, which implicitly affirmed and reassured readers about their own distinct European identity.¹¹¹ But the account also provoked sharp criticism from Catherine II, who tried to defend Russia from Chappe d’Auteroche’s charges by a meticulous review, anonymously published (*Antidote*, 1770).¹¹² In Catherine’s judgment, Chappe d’Auteroche’s report predominantly consisted of “idle talk and gossip”; only the illustrations won some recognition from her.¹¹³ Indeed, Chappe d’Auteroche planned to publish an attractive book in all respects: aiming to meet the demands of a learned European public, he added the first translation of the unabridged text of Krasheninnikov’s *Opisanie* based on the Russian original as a supplement and second volume to his own report of his travel to Tobol’sk.¹¹⁴ Both texts featured large illustrations, most of them by Jean-Baptiste Le Prince. Le Prince was a widely traveled French painter, portrait artist, and landscapist who was also well acquainted with early modern travel accounts on Russia and adjacent regions, as well as their iconographic program.¹¹⁵ Some drawings were also contributed by the

and German travelogues through Russia], in *Russland zur Zeit Katharinas II. Absolutismus—Aufklärung—Pragmatismus*, ed. Eckhard Hübner et al. (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 281–301, 290.

¹¹¹ Michel Mervaud, “L’envers du ‘Mirage russe’: Deleyre et Chappe d’Auteroche” [The other side of the Russian mirage. Deleyre and Chappe d’Auteroche], *Revue des études slaves* 70 (1998): 837–850; Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 345. On the impact of geographical discussions, see Marc Bassin, “Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *American Historical Review* 96 (1991): 763–794, 764–765; Marc Bassin, “Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space,” *Slavic Review* 50, no. 1 (1991): 1–17, 6–9.

¹¹² The “Antidote ou examen du mauvais livre ...” [Antidote or examination of the bad book ...] is newly edited by Carrère d’Encausse, ed., *L’Impératrice et l’Abbé*, 325–626. Cf. also Marcus C. Levitt, “An Antidote to Nervous Juice: Catherine the Great’s Debate with Chappe d’Auteroche over Russian Culture,” *Eighteenth Century Studies* 32 (1998): 49–63.

¹¹³ Carrère d’Encausse, ed., *L’Impératrice et l’Abbé*, 331.

¹¹⁴ [Jean Chappe d’Auteroche, ed.], *Voyage en Sibérie, tome second: contenant la description du Kamtchatka [...] par M. Krashennikow* [Journey through Siberia, vol. 2: containing a description of Kamchatka [...] by Mr. Krashennikow] (Paris: Debure, 1768), URL: <http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN334045835&DMDID=dmdlog3> (February 13, 2013); cf. Wolff, *Inventing*, 191.

¹¹⁵ Extensively on Le Prince and his colleagues working for Chappe d’Auteroche: Madeleine Pinault Sørensen, “Étude sur Le Prince et les dessinateur et graveurs du Voyage en Sibérie” [A study on Le Prince and the painters and engravers of *Voyage en Sibérie*], in Mervaud, ed., *Voyage en Sibérie*, vol. 1, 123–226, on Le Prince’s biography

less-known Jean-Michel Moreau and Caresme de Fécamp.¹¹⁶ But only Le Prince's drawings were praised by Chappe d'Auteroche as outstanding, underlining Le Prince's good knowledge of costume and nature due to his stay in Russia.¹¹⁷

As a matter of fact, Le Prince spent several years in Russia. From 1758 to 1763 he worked primarily in St. Petersburg and also painted for the Russian court. During his stay he had several opportunities to travel extensively through Russia and to take numerous sketches of landscapes and people. Those sketches he took back to France, where he became known for "Russian style" paintings and artwork.¹¹⁸ Though his participation would have been possible considering the time of his stay in Russia, Le Prince did not accompany Chappe d'Auteroche on his expedition in 1761. It is unknown whether they met in Russia. Despite contemporary scientific conventions, Chappe d'Auteroche carried out his research without a painter. But in addition to his geographical and astronomical studies, he collected various ethnographic items, which he took back to Paris.¹¹⁹ It was only after his return to Paris that those objects were drawn by Le Prince and his colleagues directly or arranged for ethnographic pictures of various kinds. One such depiction that is well-known is of a Samoyed woman and her little child in a typical fur dress.¹²⁰

125–144; cf. also Kimerly Rorschach, "Le Prince, Chappe d'Auteroche and the *Voyage en Sibérie*," in *Drawings by Jean-Baptiste Le Prince for the Voyage en Sibérie* (Philadelphia: Rosenbach Museum and Library, 1986), 9–17; Diederik Bakhuys, "Jean-Baptiste Le Prince," in *Jean-Baptiste Le Prince (Metz, 1734–Saint-Denis du Port, 1781). Le Voyage en Russie. Collections de la Ville de Rouen*, eds. Madeleine Pinault Sørensen and Diederik Bakhuys (Rouen: Musées de la Ville de Rouen, 2004), 13–22; Madeleine Pinault Sørensen, "Les Sources de Le Prince" [The sources of Le Prince], in *ibid.*, 29–31.

¹¹⁶ A total of nine engravers contributing to the volume were identified: Pinault Sørensen, "Étude," 153–158.

¹¹⁷ Chappe d'Auteroche, *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), vol. 1, ii; Carrère d'Encausse, ed., *L'Impératrice et l'Abbé*, 68; Mervaud, ed., *Voyage en Sibérie*, vol. 2, 232.

¹¹⁸ Hubert Delasalle, "Les Tapisseries des 'Jeux Russiens'" [Tapestry and the "Jeux Russiens"], *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* (1941–1944): 127–132; Rorschach, "Le Prince," 11–15.

¹¹⁹ Chappe d'Auteroche, *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), vol. 1, 341; Carrère d'Encausse, ed., *L'Impératrice et l'Abbé*, 317; Mervaud, ed., *Voyage en Sibérie*, vol. 2, 557; Rorschach, "Le Prince," 11–12.

¹²⁰ Cf. Pinault Sørensen, "Étude," 176–177, Pinault Sørensen, "Catalogue," in *Jean-Baptiste Le Prince (Metz, 1734–Saint-Denis du Port, 1781). Le Voyage en Russie. Collections de la Ville de Rouen*, eds. Madeleine Pinault Sørensen and Diederik Bakhuys (Rouen: Musées de la Ville de Rouen, 2004), no. 10, 53–54.



Fig. 5. Samoyed woman and her child, Chappe d'Aueroche, *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), vol. 1, no. 16 (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen)

Le Prince drafted a conventional ethnographic scene, especially rendering details of the costumes of the Samoyeds. The composition is simple but elaborated: the depicted persons are embedded in a forbidding landscape, evoking cold weather. At first glance the scene looks as if it might have been captured during travels in Russia. But this was not true.

The costumes were worn in an atelier by models in Paris. Chappe d'Auteroche obtained one of the costumes as present from a Russian who traveled to the Samoyeds, a fact the Abbé made clear in his text.¹²¹ The costumes are the only authentic ethnographic items in this artificial configuration. The whole scene is imagined; it only purports to portray Samoyeds in their natural habitat.

Surely Chappe d'Auteroche benefited from the experience and knowledge gathered by Le Prince. But he undoubtedly influenced the work on the drawings and drafts for the engravings very deeply, as Kimerly Rorschach has pointed out in analyzing the illustrations for Abbé's own account: "In composing the drawings, he worked very closely with Chappe, whose text offers many clues about their collaboration. In general, the scenes Le Prince illustrated were minutely described by Chappe in the text, down to details of architecture, decoration, and costume. Le Prince used these descriptions, together with his own sketches and observations, to produce illustrations which delighted the author."¹²² Despite his enthusiasm, Chappe d'Auteroche defined the different roles of scientist and painter during the process of picturing in a hierarchical way. The artists had to visualize the ideas, assumptions, and opinions of the traveling scientist. This is particularly obvious in how Chappe d'Auteroche judged the original illustrations of Krasheninnikov's *Opisanie* based on sketches made during the travels in Kamchatka according to the aforementioned guidelines of Gsell and Müller. In his opinion those pictures were badly drawn, poorly engraved, and insufficient to render properly the "ideas" of Krasheninnikov (or at least what Chappe d'Auteroche thought they should have been).¹²³ Considering the exceptional cooperation between Chappe d'Auteroche and Le Prince, Abbé's interpretation of Krasheninnikov's *Opisanie* strongly influenced the way the French artist presented the ethnographic observations from Kamchatka. A comparison between some illustrations of the Russian edition (figs. 2–4) and their revised versions will stress the difference and reveal hidden messages.

¹²¹ Chappe d'Auteroche, *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), vol. 1, 341, note 1; Carrère d'Encausse, ed., *L'Impératrice et l'Abbé*, 317, note 2; Mervaud, ed., *Voyage en Sibérie*, vol. 2, 557, note *.

¹²² Rorschach, "Le Prince," 11.

¹²³ Chappe d'Auteroche, "Avis du l'éditeur," in *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), vol. 2, ix.

Tom. II. N^o IV.



J.B. le Prince del.

J.B. Tiltard sculp.

Fig. 6. Kamchadal in winter dress, Krasheninnikov, ed. Chappe d'Auteroche, *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), vol. 2, plate 4 (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen)

Tom. II. N° III.



J.B. le Prince del.

J.B. Tilhard sculp.

Fig. 7. Various activities, Krasheninnikov, ed. Chappe d'Auteroche, *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), vol. 2, plate 3 (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen)

Tom. II. N^o I.

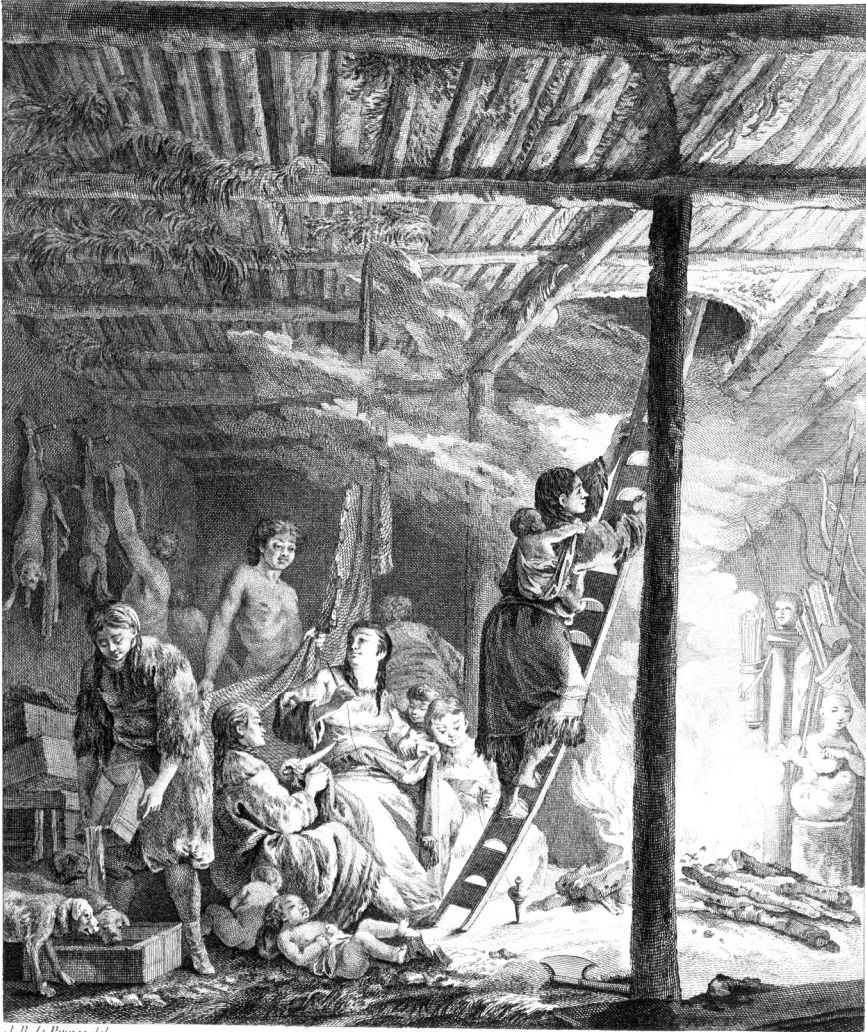


Fig. 8. Interior of a winter yurt, Krashennnikov, ed. Chappe d'Auteroche, *Voyage en Sibérie* (1768), vol. 2, plate 1 (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen)

The plate displaying the Kamchadal in his winter dress (fig. 6) is a quite faithful reversed mirror image of the Russian original model (fig. 2). The original hood is now apparently redrawn to stress a mass of seemingly wild hair, associated with “wildness” and “savageness.” The surrounding landscape is more detailed; picturesque bushes and other plants

are inserted that do not appear in the Russian engraving. Picturesque qualities are developed to a far greater extent in Le Prince's version of the illustration showing the processing and drying of fish (fig. 7, the Russian version fig. 3). Le Prince chose another section and altered the composition of the whole scene, concentrating entirely on the human activities and the flourishing vegetation in the Far North, likewise demonstrating his artistic abilities as a landscapist. Some of the men are displayed more athletically than contemporary descriptions of indigenous inhabitants would suggest. This depiction probably reflects the influence of models of Roman or Greek art and therefore of some contemporary European artistic education.¹²⁴ Le Prince produced an idyllic scene of peoples that corresponds to the enlightened concept of the "noble savage" working peacefully in nature only for means of subsistence. The annotations of the Russian versions were not transferred to the French edition.

Le Prince's interpretation of the interior of a winter yurt (fig. 8) does not have much in common with its Russian counterpart in Krashennnikov's *Opisanie* (fig. 4). The composition is completely changed. There is only a view into a small room filled with smoke from an open fire and therefore focusing on a small group of people. There is also a great lack of invented details, objects, and general disorder in the Russian engraving. The persons in the scene are arranged in a more lively way—Le Prince added some children to the scene who are absent in the Russian version. The illustration stressed the "savage," the "uncivilized" disorder and dirt, but also a sort of idyllic family life representing a common ground of culturally completely different societies.¹²⁵ Le Prince's illustrations for Chappe d'Auteroche are artistically far more ambitious than their Russian counterparts from Krashennnikov's *Opisanie*. But artistic proficiency was not the first aim for painters on expeditions committed to epistemic concepts such as truth-to-nature, trained judgment, or objectivity. The engravings in Chappe d'Auteroche's superb volumes seem instead to be constructions of the exotic "savage other," in addition the new versions of the illustrations for Krashennnikov's *Opisanie* in-

¹²⁴ Pinault Sørensen, "Catalogue," no. 16, 68–69; cf. also Karl-Heinz Kohl, "Antike in der Südsee. Körperdarstellungen in den Illustrationen von Reiseberichten des 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhunderts" [Antiquity in the South Seas. Body representation in illustrations of travel accounts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries], in *Fremde Körper. Zur Konstruktion des Anderen in europäischen Diskursen*, ed. Kerstin Gernig (Berlin: Dahlem University Press, 2001), 146–175, 149–150, 154; Mühlenberend, "Künstlerausbildung im 18. Jahrhundert," 71–74.

¹²⁵ Pinault Sørensen, "Catalogue," no. 15, 65–68.

clude mental pictures of the “noble savage.” Rather than an impartial description of “foreignness,” they reveal a European vision of non-European cultures and their mode of living.

Conclusion

This paper has given an account of the evolution of visualization strategies for ethnographic knowledge in early modern maps and reports oscillating between traditional conventions of describing and modern demands for documentation due to scientific guidelines and epistemic ideals. Cultural or religious differences and alien modes of living were major topics to be described by early modern travelers or scientists. A basic strategy of visualization in European art since ancient times for denoting ethnic or cultural differences was to stress differences in costume and adornment. Thanks to the concreteness of costume and its elements, distinctions were easily displayed visually and were basically self-explanatory. It was also quite easy for early modern mapmakers to find an immediate pictorial language to display different but concrete modes of nomadic living or economic activities of indigenous peoples, often displayed with stereotyped tents, important animals, or objects of daily use. Such a pictorial language could summarize and concentrate observations to prepare them for use in a medium of limited space, like a map.

But obviously abstract issues lack this easily representable concreteness. Natural religions or other foreign cultural contexts were described in terms that evolved on implied, mostly unuttered European and Christian norms and mental pictures. To visualize such terms (and therefore the item thus described), symbols and visual formulas were cited from a traditional pictorial repertoire of European art, often highly coded. The result was not a precise copy or visual description of an object or situation but only a more or less suitable (or unsuitable) label, needing interpretation and additional information often delivered in short comments accompanying such pictures in maps. The importance of costumes and other concrete items for visualizing ethnic distinctions and cultural differences did not diminish during the emergence of ethnology as a modern science from the eighteenth century on. Together with other items of daily use, costumes were still described, drawn, and collected in the course of numerous scientific expeditions. But the development of research practices also shaped the scientists and how they looked at the given items. Guidelines not only defined how to perceive an object of research but also how to depict it

properly, due to epistemic ideals like truth-to-nature, trained judgment, or objectivity. In all cases human interference was part of the process of depicting and imaging in order to emphasize certain characteristics, to show the general or the exceptional, and sometimes also to eliminate in order to highlight important patterns or the “idea of a scientist.” The illustrations included in Krashennnikov’s *Opisanie* might exemplify the attempt to capture ethnographic items due to instructions and guidelines: they are more or less artless. Their aim is to record a maximum of observed data and to present them in a clear unambiguous way, using the immediacy of pictures for communication. They represent artificial “typical” images, which are often a combination of separate pictures with a new scene. A far more synthetic character of a mere artificial construction is to be detected in the illustrations included in Chappe d’Auteroche’s *Voyage en Sibérie*. The aim of visualization is to display the “idea of the voyager or scientist,” as already discussed above. The partly new illustrations were developed from antetypes, but after the revision they are more representative of pieces of European art depicting ethnographic issues as exotic topics mirroring the way of perceiving, arranging, and depicting due to the conventions of traditional artistic education. This also implied some influence of mental pictures current in contemporary European philosophy, like the concept of the “noble savage,” which can be found beside the visualization of the “barbarian” and the “wild” also coded in ethnographic illustrations. By describing, condensing, and symbolizing ethnic and cultural difference in displaying easily representable modes of living and costume, such illustrations formed a potent and long-lasting imagery of ethnography from its very beginnings as a modern science.

Empire Complex: Arrangements in the Russian Ethnographic Museum, 1910

Roland Cvetkovski

Perhaps that is what museums are good for.
Like philosophy, they are an avenue
that conducts us
outside ourselves.

Hilde S. Hein

If self-reflection marks the first step toward wisdom, then self-knowledge could certainly pass for the achievement of wisdom. Nikolai M. Mogilianskii, ethnographer and head of the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg from 1910 to 1918, must have had something similar in mind when he wrote about the purpose of museums for Russia. All their exhibits, he wrote, taught man to address as well as to cherish the everyday objects that surrounded him and that he usually paid no attention to. But museums did not simply restore the dignity of the object; they achieved much more. To Mogilianskii they even articulated an overall human idea, because they “inspire a broader public to societal self-knowledge, to conscious love for their environs, for their little provincial home, for their fatherland and finally [stretching] to a worldwide feeling of humanity.”¹ Such a deep impact on mankind might be surprising on this scale, but one is certainly amazed to hear what actually caused it: Dmitrii A. Klements, renowned ethnographer, colleague, and predecessor of Mogilianskii as head of the Russian Ethnographic Museum, had already proclaimed that what humanity needed most and what defined a

¹ N.M. Mogilianskii, “Oblastnoi ili mestnyi muzei, kak tip kul’turnago uchrezhdeniia” [Regional or local museums as a kind of cultural institution], *Zhivaia Starina* 25, no. 4 (1916): 303–326, quotation from 307.

museum was “factual knowledge.” Arranged and composed in a “systematic collection,” this knowledge materialized in the objects, which, conversely, as endowed with the capacity to tell about this knowledge, were not dead but actually “vital things.”² Mogilianskii absolutely agreed with this argument; he himself had insisted that the museum had to be regarded as a “vibrant laboratory.”³

True, the universal as well as moral context in which both men placed the museum was largely due to the high pedagogical standards they deemed an important part of their professional mission. It was only in the last years of the nineteenth century that Russia experienced major momentum in institutionalizing permanent ethnographic displays, and by establishing the Russian Ethnographic Museum’s collection, Mogilianskii—and even more so, Klements—played a significant role in the process. Apart from a few provincial establishments such as in Kharkov’, Arkhangel’sk, Tbilisi, or Irkutsk,⁴ the two most important ethnographic museums could be found in the capital. First was the museum of the Academy of Sciences *Muzei po Antropologii i Etnografii*, founded in 1879, which was Peter I’s former curiosity cabinet, the *Kunstkamera*. Even though this institution collected objects from all over the world, the addition “predominantly of Russia” was not deleted from its official name until 1903. Second was the ethnographic section of the Russian Museum, which here will be referred to as the Russian Ethnographic Museum. It was founded in 1895, officially came into being in 1902, and focused on the presentation of primarily Slavic tribes of the Russian Empire.⁵

² D.A. Klements, *Mestnye muzei i ikh znachenie v provintsial’noi zhizni* [Local museums and their meaning for provincial life] (Irkutsk: Tip. K.I. Vitkovskoi, 1893), 2 and 9.

³ Mogilianskii, “Oblastnoi ili mestnyi muzei,” 318.

⁴ In the field of natural history, the Russian province experienced its first boom in the founding of museums as early as the 1870s. The first was established in Iaroslavl’ in 1865. See N.N. Pozdniakov, “Politekhnikeskii muzei i ego nauchno-prosvetitel’nye deiatel’nosti 1872–1917 gg.” [The polytechnical museum and its scientific-educational activities, 1872–1917], in *Istoriia muzeinogo dela v SSSR. Sbornik statei* [History of museum affairs in the USSR. An anthology], no. 1 (Moscow: Goskul’tprosvetizdat, 1957), 129–158; D.A. Ravikovich, “Iz istorii organizatsii sibirskikh muzeev v XIX v.” [From the history of the organization of the Siberian museums in the nineteenth century], in *Istoriia muzeinogo dela*, no. 1, 159–191, here 165.

⁵ For a brief introduction, see A.M. Razgon, “Etnograficheskie muzei v Rossii (1861–1917)” [Ethnographic museums in Russia, 1861–1917], in *Ocherki istorii muzeinogo dela v Rossi* [Outline of the history of museum affairs in Russia], no. 3 (Moscow: Goskul’tprosvetizdat, 1961), 231–268; Isabella I. Changuina, “Les musées ethnographiques en Russie,” *Ethnologie française* 26, no. 4 (1996): 599–610; T.V. Staniukovich,

What is striking now are the epithets “vital” and “vibrant” that Klements and Mogilianskii used to describe the function of the museum object. In so doing they took an explicitly modern approach to a phenomenon that was a comparatively new scientific issue in Russia. Emphasizing its exhibitionary status, these ascriptions obviously provided things with the new quality of being a powerful social communicator. In the nineteenth century, as a period of massive museum foundations and of increasing museological alignments of historical culture, the importance of objects in general for human life had increased significantly, and had taken on edifying and even religious functions⁶—the authenticity of museum exhibits empowered objects to represent reality in a seemingly undistorted way.⁷ But equally, nineteenth-century museum exhibitions were mostly subjected to the national paradigm and thus tended to construct essentialized group entities, so that particularly ethnographic objects seemed to approve differences between them substantially. They thus became a potent instrument of identity-making—ethnographic displays were a visualization of as well as confrontation with the Other, but in the same way they manifested political dependencies and cultural hierarchies.⁸ As in imperial contexts

Kunstkamera peterburgskoi akademii nauk [The *Kunstkamera* of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg] (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1953); T.V. Staniukovich, “Muzei antropologii i etnografii za 250 let,” in *250 let Muzeia antropologii i etnografii imeni Petra Velikogo* (Sbornik Muzeia antropologii i etnografii 22) [250 years of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography] (Moscow and Leningrad: Nauka, 1964), 5–150; *Rossiiskii etnograficheskii muzei 1902–2002. Al'bom* [The Russian Ethnographic Museum. An album] (St. Petersburg: Slavia, 2001). For reasons of simplification, I will use the term “Ethnographic Museum” in capitals for the ethnographic section of the Russian museum in St. Petersburg, and the term “academy museum” to denominate the *Muzei po Antropologii i Etnografii*.

⁶ Didier Maleuvre, “Von Geschichte und Dingen. Das Zeitalter der Ausstellung” [Of history and things. The period of exhibitions], in *Die Ausstellung. Politik eines Rituals* [The exposition. Politics of a ritual], eds. Dorothea von Hantelmann and Carolin Meister (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2010), 19–46; Albert K. Baïbourine, “Les aspects sémiotiques du fonctionnement des objets,” *Ethnologie française* 26, no. 4 (1996): 641–653.

⁷ In general Susan Pearce, ed., *Objects of Knowledge* (London: Athlone Press, 1990); Gaynor Kavanagh, ed., *Museum Languages: Objects and Texts* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), and recently John Potvin and Alla Myzelev, eds., *Material Cultures, 1740–1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

⁸ Museum objects necessarily create identity: see James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1988), 218–220; George W. Stocking, Jr., “Essays on Museums and Material Culture,” in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 3–14. It has

elsewhere, ethnographers in Russia used the exhibitionary complex as an opportunity to organize imperial diversity in miniature. In particular, the Ethnographic Museum in Petersburg, with its focus on the Russian Empire, served as a platform where ethnographic features were translated into imperial identity patterns that regulated the relations between the different peoples in Russia. Obviously, the ethnographic objects' mission consisted of transforming ethnographic descriptions into imperial knowledge.⁹

The first major attempt to visualize imperial knowledge on the basis of ethnographic exhibits was made by the "Society of Lovers of Natural Sci-

also been argued that nineteenth-century museums in general signified places of civic discipline, whereas ethnographic museums in particular served to build up a national public and thus confirmed one's own supremacy; these arguments evidently refer to Foucault. See Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992), 167–190; Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 59–88, and Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2004). The topical widening of the museum complex by weakening the Foucauldian argument has been skillfully realized for the German context by H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). See also H. Glenn Penny, "Bastian's Museum: On the Limits of Empiricism and the Transformation of German Ethnology," in *Wordly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire*, eds. H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 86–126. A fundamental criticism of viewing the museum as a solely disciplining agency by emphasizing its dialogic setting was also voiced by Andrea Witcomb, *Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* (London: Routledge, 2003), 1–12.

⁹ There is rich literature on the intersection between objects and empire especially for the British case. See, for example, John Mackenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, eds., *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998); David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Amiria J.M. Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); the case study of Maya Jasanoff, "Collectors of Empire: Objects, Conquests and Imperial Self-Fashioning," *Past and Present* 184 (August 2004): 109–135, and recently the more theoretical treatment of that issue by Erika Rappaport, "Imperial Possessions, Cultural Histories, and the Material Turn: Response," *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 2 (2008): 289–296, and Kaori O'Connor, "The King's Christmas Pudding: Globalization, Recipes, and the Commodities of Empire," *Journal of Global History*, no. 4 (2009): 127–155; Sarah Longair and John McAleer, eds., *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

ence” (*Obshchestvo liubitelei estestvoznaniia*), which had organized the famous ethnographic exposition in Moscow in the summer of 1867.¹⁰ The society’s members had been deeply convinced that this exhibition would meet the expectations of all imperial inhabitants because, as they claimed in a tone of utter conviction, those inhabitants had increasingly shown “a fervent interest in [...] everything concerning Russia.”¹¹ Although the exposition was divided into three main sections and displayed objects from almost sixty regions and nationalities,¹² it intended to show the dominance of Russian culture. Unfortunately, the realization of this conception was not entirely successful. So the Russian critics had bitterly complained about the mannequins that were placed all over the exhibition

¹⁰ This society was crucial for the general development as well as institutionalization of ethnographic knowledge. See R.S. Lipets and T.S. Makashina, “Rol’ Obshchestva liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii v organizatsii russkoi etnograficheskoi nauki” [The role of the Society of Lovers of Natural Science, Anthropology, and Ethnography in the formation of Russian ethnographic science], in *Ocherki istorii russkoi etnografii, fol’kloristiki i antropologii* [Outlines of the history of Russian ethnography, folklore studies, and anthropology], no. 3 (Trudy instituta etnografii im. N.N. Miklukho-Maklaia. Novaia seriia, vol. 91) (Moscow: Akademija nauk SSSR, 1965), 39–60; T.D. Gladkova, “Antropologicheskii otdel Obshchestva liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii,” in *Ocherki istorii russkoi etnografii, fol’kloristiki i antropologii* [Outlines of the history of Russian ethnography, folklore studies, and anthropology], no. 2 (Trudy instituta etnografii im. N.N. Miklukho-Maklaia. Novaia seriia, vol. 85) (Moscow: Akademija nauk SSSR, 1963), 175–196.

¹¹ Quotation: *Otchet po ustroistvu russkoi etnograficheskoi vystavki i russkago muzeia v Moskve* [Report on the organization of the Russian Ethnographic Exposition and the Russian Museum in Moscow] (St. Petersburg: Tip. Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1867), 5. Main sources on this exposition are: *Vserossiiskaia etnograficheskaja vystavka ustroennaia Imperatorskim Obshchestvom liubitelei estestvoznaniia, sostoiaščim pri Moskovskom universitete, v 1867 godu* [All-Russian Ethnographic Exposition organized by the Society of Lovers of Natural Sciences at Moscow University, 1867] (Moscow: Universitetskaja tipografiia 1867), esp. 26 and 94; as well as: “Etnograficheskaja vystavka 1867 goda Imperatorskago Obshchestva liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii sostoiaščago pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom universitete” [1867 Ethnographic Exposition of the Imperial Society of Lovers of Natural Science, Anthropology, and Ethnography at the Imperial Moscow University], in *Izvestiia Imperatorskago Obshchestva liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii* 29 (Moscow: Tip. M.N. Lavrova, 1878); for detailed list of exhibits, see 39–71.

¹² One gets a brief impression in *Putevoditel’ po Moskovskoi etnograficheskoi vystavke* [Guide to the Moscow Ethnographic Exhibition] (Moscow: Universitetskaja tipografiia, 1867). For the planning and the problems with the realization of the exposition, see Nataniel Nait, “Imperiia napokaz: Vserossiiskaia etnograficheskaja vystavka 1867 goda” [Empire on display. The All-Russian Ethnographic Exposition in 1867], *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 51 (2001): 111–131.

area and which were dressed in the various traditional costumes. Those mannequins, they said, which represented the Russians proper, had inexplicably come out looking substandard, and even ugly. Compared to the other ethnic groups, they lamented, it was a shame that the most important part of the empire's population came off so badly, even though all mannequins had been carefully designed by Russian artists. Obviously, to the critics the exposition failed to present the Empire's composition truthfully, and thus it failed to represent its real distribution of cultural achievements. In the end, after the exhibition was closed in autumn 1867, all ethnographic objects, including the mannequins, were handed over to the Rumiantsev Museum in Moscow, where a permanent ethnographic exhibitionary section, known as the Dashkov Museum, was established.

This rather bizarre and seemingly trivial episode, however, allows at least two principal observations. First, the success of an exhibition was largely gauged by its material truthfulness and with it by its objective reality. It seems that the objects of the exposition were actually considered a *presentation* of the Russian Empire, and obviously none of the organizers looked upon the exhibition room as a mere place of *representation*.¹³ This was particularly true for Klements, for whom objects, as we have heard, were even supposed to communicate and to inspire moral improvement. Against the backdrop of an imperial image determined by a Russian national concept, this moral improvement ultimately meant that the ethnographic object developed into a self-cultivating tool, to a—so to speak—“Russian” pledge of domination, happiness, and even humanity.¹⁴ But ac-

¹³ D.A. Baranov, “Etnograficheskii muzei i ‘ratsionalizatsiia sistemy’” [The Ethnographic Museum and the “rationalization of the system”], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 4 (2010): 26–43.

¹⁴ National concepts ultimately gained importance after 1863 and especially after 1881 under the formative ideological influence of the *ober-prokuror* of the Most Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev. He connected the Russian Empire with a genuinely Russian statehood and a fairly aggressive Russification by fusing elements of nationalism and Orthodoxy with Slavophile ideas. See Robert F. Byrnes, “Russia and the West: The Views of Pobedonostsev,” *Journal of Modern History* 40, no. 2 (1968): 234–256; Dietrich Geyer, *Der russische Imperialismus. Studien über den Zusammenhang von innerer und auswärtiger Politik 1860–1914* [Russian imperialism. Studies on the connection between home and foreign policy, 1860–1914] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977), 43–55; John D. Basil, “Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev: An Argument for a Russian State Church,” *Church History* 64, no. 1 (1995): 44–61; Frank Golczewski and Gertrud Pickhan, *Russischer Nationalismus. Die russische Idee im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Darstellung und Texte* [Russian nationalism. The Russian idea in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Description and texts] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und

cording to the complaints, the object's mere appearance hampered a smooth transition from ethnographic to imperial knowledge—the objects as such appeared unwieldy, if not unmanageable. From this practical point of view, the museum curators had to face the problem that in trying to realize specific narratives in the exhibition, they simultaneously visualized the ambivalence and even refractoriness of knowledge due to its material aspects.

Second, if we take the connection between the museum object and its knowledge capacity seriously, we have to ask for the various contexts in which they developed their specific significances and the way in which the statements the objects were supposed to make depended on these specific contexts. Therefore one should be careful to reduce the museum setting to the purpose of solely exhibiting and displaying objects. That would obscure the numerous but momentous mechanisms as well as obstacles taking effect, as it were, behind the museum showcases. It would also conceal the variety of discourses determining the meanings of the ethnographic-imperial object on quite a few levels. Questions of organizing the museum management, of providing professionals, of scientifically classifying the objects, or of conceiving of the museum architecture not only made up the whole museum complex as such but also impinged on the object's very composition, presentation, and eventually ascriptions more or less directly. Instead it seems more reasonable to assume a museum ensemble consisting of museum objects, museum-makers, museum concepts, and the museum public that together had a decisive impact on the particular conceptualizations of ethnographic knowledge as well as on the transformation of ethnographic into imperial knowledge.¹⁵ Seen from this angle, the generation of, just like the relation between, ethnographic and imperial knowledge becomes an entirely medium-bound and multi-layered process of high complexity.

Thus, referring to empire in the museum has little, if anything, to do with the empire itself. On the contrary, its realization is entirely subjected to the specific techniques of the medium—in our case, collecting, arranging, storing, showing, and contemplating—in which it is processed. Displayed empire must necessarily hark back to the *museum* concept of

Ruprecht, 1998), 50–65; Andreas Renner, *Russischer Nationalismus und Öffentlichkeit im Zarenreich 1855–1875* [Russian nationalism and public in the Tsarist Empire, 1855–1875] (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000).

¹⁵ These are still current questions; see, for example, Brian Durrans, “The Future of the Other: Changing Cultures on Display in Ethnographic Museums,” in *The Museum Time-Machine*, ed. Robert Lumley (London: Routledge, 1988), 144–169.

empire. The following five sections try to develop this argument concerning the Ethnographic Museum at a time when imperial and ethnographic issues were thought to be identical.¹⁶ The Museum laid bare the intricate entanglements emerging from and inscribed in the ethnographic object pertaining to phenomena such as science, ethnicity, ideology, and politics. To elucidate these contexts, the following considerations first briefly address the general scientific discourse on ethnographic objects in Russia. Second, it examines the years of a largely international apprenticeship of Russian museum experts, followed by two paragraphs dedicated to the repercussions of these first two preconditions. The third part deals with the conceptualization of the Ethnographic Museum itself when ethnographic and museum professionals actually turned into imperial experts. The fourth proceeds to the frequently overlooked issue of collecting and recording of ethnographic objects, which sheds light on the inner scientific mechanics of order among the museum objects themselves. Then the fifth section turns to the visible surface of the museum and focuses on the exhibitionary setting in looking at one of the Ethnographic Museum's first expositions in 1910. The sixth part consists of a short conclusion.

Russian Realities: Nationalizing Ethnographic Objects

In the nineteenth century, tsarist imperial policy overtly bore imprints of a civilizing mission.¹⁷ The peripheries peopled by numerous ethnic groups

¹⁶ Alexander Semyonov, "'The Real and Live Ethnographic Map of Russia': The Russian Empire in the Mirror of the State Duma," in *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire*, eds. Ilya Gerasimov, Jan Kusber, and Alexander Semyonov (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 191–228.

¹⁷ For a broader discussion, see Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby Schrader, and Willard Sunderland, eds., *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History* (London: Routledge, 2007). The most prominent examples certainly were Siberia and the Caucasus: see Dittmar Dahlmann, "Sibirien: Der Prozess der Eroberung des Subkontinents und die russische Zivilisierungsmission im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert" [Siberia. The process of the conquest of the subcontinent and the Russian civilizing mission in the seventeenth and eighteenth century], in *Zivilisierungsmissionen*, eds. Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel (Konstanz: UVK, 2005), 55–71; Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). See also Jörg Baberowski, "Auf der Suche nach Eindeutigkeit: Kolonialismus und zivilisatorische Mission im Zarenreich und in der Sowjetunion" [In search of unambiguity. Colonialism and civilizing mission in imperial and Soviet Russia], *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 47, no. 4 (1999): 482–504.

were to benefit from the civilizing level of the Russian people.¹⁸ As in imperial contexts elsewhere, the civilizing position of the Russians, as the population of the imperial heartland, was for a long time unquestioned. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that Russian ethnographers started to press for an ethnographic self-description and eventually embarked on exploring the Russian people itself. But what is more, the particular research program to investigate the empire's core nation had a decisive impact on the general formation of ethnography as a scientific discipline.

The first programmatic approach to ethnographic knowledge ensued from the foundation of the Russian Geographical Society in 1845. Its ethnographic section, established simultaneously, was intended to set the tone for Russia's future ethnographers, even though bitter controversies marked the first years of its existence. The quarrel was over the section's concrete purpose and the specific methods to be applied. In the process two parties were formed—a German faction led by the renowned Baltic natural scientist and first head of the ethnographic section Karl Ernst von Baer, and a Russian camp most prominently represented by the literary critic Nikolai I. Nadezhdin. To signal the section's strictly scientific orientation, Baer and his colleagues argued in favor of an institutional association with the Academy of Sciences and suggested that all peoples of the Russian Empire had to serve as objects of ethnographic research. Future studies would provide materials of tribes whose languages, traditions, and cultural specificities were threatened with extinction, and scientific interest was to be focused on the cultural effect the ecological surroundings had on these peoples. The Slavic group, however, instead advocated an alignment of ethnographic work with the notion of *narodnost'*—nationality—and Nadezhdin unmistakably made clear that primarily the Russians should be investigated. When Nadezhdin replaced Baer in 1848 as head of the section, these arguments abruptly ended and were decided in favor of the Slavic faction.¹⁹

¹⁸ A striking counterexample of this presumed civilizing gradient was the failed *mission civilisatrice* in Central Asia. See Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) and Alexander S. Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁹ For details on this controversy, see Nathaniel Knight, "Science, Empire, and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845–1855," in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 108–141; Wladimir Berelowitch, "Aux origines de l'ethnographie Russe. La société de géographie dans les années 1840–1850," *Cahiers du monde russe et*

Meanwhile, in an 1847 lecture, Nadezhdin sketched the outlines of the new ethnography and called for an analytical approach, opining that the exploration of the Russian people must not content itself with merely amassing ethnographic materials. Instead, ethnography had to embrace three fields of study, namely, linguistic, physical, and psychological features in which, as Nadezhdin put it, it had to identify in particular the cultural characteristics of the Russian nationality. Interestingly, this specific methodology resurfaced only a few years later in an 1851 program, again conceived by Nadezhdin—this time, however, for a planned Kamchatka expedition that was to explore the *inorodtsy*, that is, the non-Russian population. True, these guidelines had been slightly modified to accentuate the physical-anthropological aspect and weaken the linguistic and folkloristic arguments. But in general the orientation of ethnographic research still strongly stuck to a depiction of the empire along nationalities.²⁰

This approach, though, had a twofold meaning that was seminal for the future design of the ethnographic object in Russia. On the one hand, the organization of imperial ethnography according to nationalities remained obligatory for the further treatment of that issue. The confinement to “national” entities soon hardened to a basic pattern for comprehending imperial structures in general. On the other, due to the focus on gathering ethnographic facts, the studies were mainly descriptive, both those on the Russians and those on the *inorodtsy*. The mere description of the imperial peoples was considered essential, because—it was commonly held—an analytical conclusion could not be drawn before an adequate amount of ethnographic materials was at hand. The rather theoretical approach that developed in American, British, French, or German contexts and that tended to classify ethnographic objects along racial or evolutionist categories²¹ appealed only to some of the Russian ethnographers who picked up,

soviétique 31, no. 2–3 (1990): 265–274; Mark Bassin, “The Russian Geographical Society, the ‘Amur-Epoch’ and the Great Siberian Expedition 1855–1863,” *Annals of the Association of the American Geographers* 73, no. 2 (1983): 240–256.

²⁰ Nathaniel Knight, “Seeking the Self in the Other: Ethnographic Studies of Non-Russians in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845–1860,” in *Defining Self: Essays on Emergent Identities in Russia; Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Studia Fennica Ethnologica; 10), ed. Michael Branch (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society 2009), 117–138.

²¹ Fredrik Barth, Andre Gingrich, Robert Parkin, and Sydel Silverman, *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French and American Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Anja Laukötter, *Von der “Kultur” zur “Rasse”—vom Objekt zum Körper? Völkerkundemuseen und ihre Wissenschaften zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* [From culture to race—from object to body? Ethnological museums and their sciences at the beginning of the twentieth century] (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007).

if any, merely evolutionist theory. This could be a reason why the image of a civilizing gradient indicative of a colonial narrative was not too pronounced in Russian ethnography—by and large, comparable ethnographic standards were applied to the Russians as well as to the *inorodtsy*. This descriptive attitude, characteristic of most of the Russian ethnographers, abstained from or, at least was cautious about, presumptuous assessments of non-Russian peoples. Thus it somewhat flattened the hierarchy between the different ethnic groups within the empire.

Anti-Autocratism and Ethnographic Interest: Shaping Museum Contexts

In the late nineteenth century, Russian imperial ethnography experienced a specific development that depended both on the particular political situation and on the protagonists' intellectual involvement in international ethnographic discussions and museological discussions, respectively. After the mid-nineteenth century, the ethnographic issue evolved from a folkloristic and Russian-centered approach; after the emancipation of the peasants in 1861, it was joined by a burgeoning interest in the common law, including from the non-Russian population. As a consequence numerous post-emancipation authorities embarked on studies of peasant communities, and simultaneously the young urban intelligentsia flooded into the villages and went "to the people," as they put it, with the intention of bringing enlightenment and education to the rural inhabitants. Actually, in being strongly influenced by the radical ideas of Alexander I. Gertsen and Nikolai G. Chernyshevskii, the underlying motivation of these first serious Russian social revolutionaries, the *narodniki*, was their belief in the people's superiority to the educated imperial elites and their conviction that once the common people became aware of their own power, they would ultimately be able to free themselves from political paternalism. In the eyes of the *narodniki*, industrialization as well as oppressive autocracy had betrayed and corrupted the Russian pre-capitalist peasant community, which had long been organizing agrarian work on a collective basis. Having this in mind, the provincial historians, as well as the first museum curators, hastened to scour the regions for significant local relics to document the alleged supremacy of the old rural and apparently early socialist practice. Thus enlightenment and resistance were the principal goals of the *narodniki*, for whom human progress and the enhancement of living standards in general were connected with the recourse to traditions, but also with overt political opposition.

The ethnographers-to-be, as part of the imperial intellectual elite, had largely been involved in this short-lived but powerful movement. Many of them who would be prominently engaged in museum work around 1900, such as L. Ia. Shternberg, A.N. Maksimov, D.A. Klements, V.G. Bogoraz, and V.I. Iokhel'son, had been exiled to Siberia because of their Populist activities in the 1870s and 1880s. When they eventually became exiled because of their involvement in anti-autocratic agitation, they had already internalized the *narodniki's* approach to ethnic and political difference. Making a virtue out of necessity, in the places where they had been banished, they turned their native Siberian hosts into objects of their scientific interest. From these first steps in ethnographic fieldwork, milestones of Russian ethnography eventually resulted, like Shternberg's study on the Gilyak, Bogoraz's on the Chukchi, and Iokhel'son's on the Koriak.²² Paradoxically, although their preoccupation with the non-Russian residents owed a lot to their contempt for autocratic authority, their scientific interest corroborated Russia's imperial nature and thus indirectly fostered political rule through autocracy. In the end the exiles' ethnographic curiosity was a kind of affirmation of the empire.

This new generation of Russian ethnographers focused its attention on the complex of family and marriage, clan organization, kinship and religion. In so doing they obviously referred to the writings of Lewis H. Morgan and, even more so, of Edward B. Tylor, who had brought the evolutionist concept of culture to the fore in the 1860s and 1870s. The latter's conception relied on the assumption that human culture was characterized by a dynamic moving from a simple to a complex formation of civilization, regardless of specific cultural preconditions. Inasmuch as most of the exiles had more or less adapted this evolutionist approach,

²² L. Ia. Shternberg, *The Social Organization of the Gilyak*, edited with a foreword and afterword by Bruce Grant (New York: LVI, 1999); V.G. Bogoraz, *The Chukchee* [reprint of the 1904–1909 edition] (New York: AMS Press, 1975); Waldemar Jochelson, *The Koryak* [reprint of the 1908 edition] (New York: AMS Press, 1975). They all had been taking part in Boas's famous Jesup North Pacific Expedition, in the context of which these works were published. For this connection, see Stanley A. Freed, Ruth S. Freed, and Laila Williamson, "Capitalist Philanthropy and Russian Revolutionaries: The Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897–1902)," *American Anthropologist* 90, no. 1 (1988): 7–24; Igor' I. Krupnik, "Jesup Genealogy: Intellectual Partnership and Russian-American Cooperation in Arctic/North Pacific Anthropology; Part I: From the Jesup Expedition to the Cold War, 1897–1948," *Arctic Anthropology* 35, no. 2 (1998): 199–226. More generally, see Igor' I. Krupnik and William W. Fitzhugh, eds., *Gateways: Exploring the Legacy of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, 1897–1902* (Washington, DC: Arctic Studies Center, 2001).

they did primarily regard the natives as incomplete, but they had also developed a deep sympathy and even love for these tribes. The exiles' strong affection for the indigenous peoples as representatives of the lower strata was certainly the continuation of their former political engagement as *narodniki*, which had led them to the periphery of Russian society and taught them to cherish the traditions and creativity of the common people. Basically, these banished intellectuals were united in the admiration of the native clans they were exploring, particularly because of their apparent purity and unspoiled way of life.²³

For the advancement of Russian ethnography as well as the promotion of museum practice, these international entanglements had a dual importance. First, the principal change these exiles effected was the gradual establishment of fieldwork as a significant and reliable way of providing ethnographic objects. While expeditions were still considered the standard way to obtain ethnographic materials, the British anthropologists Lorimer Fison, Alfred W. Howitt, and Alfred C. Haddon relied on another method that was not satisfied with simply gathering objects but tried to grasp a foreign culture by its own linguistic descriptions. "Participating observation"—living with indigenous peoples and learning their language—formed a significant part of the new approach to ethnographic research.²⁴ In Russia it was Lev Ia. Shternberg, ethnographic curator in the academy museum in St. Petersburg since 1901, who was the first to systematically combine ethnographic fieldwork with linguistics,²⁵ predating Bronisław

²³ O. Iu. Artemeva, "Zabytie stranitsy otechestvennoi nauki: A.N. Maksimov i ego issledovaniia po istoricheskoi etnografii" [Forgotten aspects of Russian science. A.N. Maksimov and his research in historical ethnography], *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 4 (1991): 45–64, here 47–50; Bruce Grant, "Empire and Savagery: The Politics of Primitivism in Late Imperial Russia," in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, eds. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 292–310; Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 123–129; S.A. Tokarev, *Istoriia russkoi etnografii (dooktiabr'skii period)* [History of Russian ethnography (pre-revolutionary period)] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo nauka, 1966), 306–310, 357–359, 424–429; George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 144–185, 233–237.

²⁴ For British anthropology in general, see the standard volume of Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*; for the epistemic change in fieldwork, see George W. Stocking, Jr., *After Tylor: British Social Anthropology 1888–1951* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 15–46, 84–123.

²⁵ During his exile on Sakhalin Island in the 1890s, he had lived several times for a longer period with the Gilyak people, focusing on kinship relations and the social organization

Malinowski by two decades. Furthermore, he established fieldwork in Russia as a new technique for procuring knowledge in both pre-revolutionary and Soviet ethnography. Second, and more directly connected with ethnographic museum work, a certain theoretical bias can be observed. As the evolutionist idea of British anthropology had been taken up by a number of exiled Russian ethnographers, it was again Shternberg who most persistently advocated the evolutionist approach to culture—which he espoused until his death in 1927—and who insisted on the realization of the evolutionary concept in the exhibition rooms of ethnographic museums.²⁶ But still, in Russia the practice of display revealed considerable differences from that in America, Britain, or Germany, where the evolutionist model had been partly abandoned in favor of historicist, empiricist, and geographical arrangements. Aside from the famous Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University, archetype of the evolutionary arrangement of ethnographic objects, in 1880s America, too, an evolutionist and deductive approach reigned. However, it was intended not so much to display the grandeur of Western civilization as to demonstrate the general progress of culture. By contrast, the German *Museum für Völkerkunde* in Berlin under the direction of Adolf Bastian preferred a rather historicist as well as inductive display of ethnographic objects, highlighting an open concept and avoiding the establishment of one specific museum narration. Instead, Bastian supported a broad and comparative approach and refused to assign to any museum object a particular value merely because of a specific arrangement in which it was placed. To him the localization of general empirical laws was only possible by practicing the method of comparison.²⁷

of the aboriginal clan. See Shternberg, *Social Organization of the Gilyak*. There is a massive secondary literature on him; see the comprehensive and well-written biography by Sergei Kan, *Lev Shternberg: Anthropologist, Russian Socialist, Jewish Activist* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

²⁶ Sergei Kan, "Evolutionism and Historical Particularism at the St. Petersburg Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography," *Museum Anthropology* 31, no. 1 (2008): 28–46. Concerning Shternberg's evolutionist position, see L. Ia. Shternberg, "Muzei Antropologii i Etnografii imeni Imperatora Petra Velikago" [The Tsar Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography], *Zhivaia starina* 20, no. 1 (1911): 453–472.

²⁷ Chris Gosden and Frances Larson, *Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum 1884–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); David K. van Keuren, "Museums and Ideology: Augustus Pitt-Rivers, Anthropological Museums, and Social Change in Later Victorian Britain," *Victorian Studies* 28, no. 1 (1984): 171–189; Ira Jacknis, "Franz Boas and Exhibits: On the Limitations of the Museum Method of Anthropology," in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, ed.

The pre-revolutionary staff of the Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg, however, did not strictly adhere to a specific theoretical display concept as, for example, Shternberg did in the academy museum. Aside from E.A. Liatskii, K.A. Inostrantsev, F.K. Volkov, and A.A. Miller, who worked as ethnographic curators in that period, it was the aforementioned first directors N.M. Mogilianskii and particularly D.A. Klements who had the most influence on the museum's concept. Klements was a multi-talented ethnographer with a thorough knowledge of anthropology, geology, hydrography, and meteorology. He was one of the few Russian ethnographers who could draw on previous museum experience when starting his museum career in St. Petersburg in 1897—first at the academy museum under Vasilii V. Radlov and thereafter in 1902 as head of the Ethnographic Museum. During his exile in Siberia, he worked for over six years with N.M. Mart'ianov at the famous Minusinsk Museum, where he learned to administer a cultural institution, purchase ethnographic objects and collections, and arrange exhibitions, as well as generally pondering the value of museums for Russian society.²⁸

George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 75–111; H. Glenn Penny, “Die Welt im Museum: Räumliche Anordnung, globales Denken und Völkerkundemuseen im ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert” [The world in the museum. Spatial arrangement, global thinking, and ethnological museums in the late nineteenth century], in *Welt-Räume. Geschichte, Geographie und Globalisierung seit 1900* [World-spaces. History, geography, and globalization since 1900], eds. Iris Schröder and Sabine Höhler (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005), 74–99, here 83–84. Before leaving Germany the young Franz Boas, the doyen of American anthropology, worked with Adolf Bastian in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin.

²⁸ S.F. Ol'denburg, “Dmitrii Aleksandrovich i Elizaveta Nikolaevna Klements. In memoriam” [Dmitrii A. and Elizaveta N. Klements. In memoriam], *Zhivaia starina* 24 (1915): 169–172; I.V. Dubov, “U istokov rossiiskogo etnograficheskogo muzeia (k 150-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia Dmitriia Aleksandrovicha Klementsa)” [The origins of the Russian Ethnographic Museum (150th anniversary of Dmitrii A. Klements)], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 6 (1998): 112–121; I.V. Dubov, ed., *Pigmalion muzeinogo dela v Rossii: k 150-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia D. A. Klements* [Pygmalion of the museum affairs in Russia: 150th anniversary of D.A. Klements] (St. Petersburg: Lan', 1997); A.P. Kondakov, “D.A. Klements – osnovatel' etnograficheskogo otdela Russkogo muzeia” [D.A. Klements. Founder of the ethnographic section of the Russian Museum], in *Ocherki istorii russkoi etnografii, fol'kloristiki i antropologii* [Outlines of the history of Russian ethnography, folklore studies and anthropology], no. 4 (Trudy instituta etnografii im. N.N. Miklukho-Maklaia. Novaia seriia, vol. 94) (Moscow: Akademija nauk SSSR, 1968), 45–61; V.I. Fedorova, *Revoliutsionnyi narodnik, uchenyi i prosvetitel' D.A. Klements* [Revolutionary populist, scholar, and enlightener D.A. Klements] (Krasnoarsk: Izdatel'stvo Krasnoiarskogo universiteta, 1988).

As most of the Russian ethnographers were largely autodidacts and all Russian museum practitioners in this field were, as a rule, recruited from them, they all necessarily had to acquire their skills through on-the-job training. Although the importance of museums was emphasized early by the Archaeological Society in Moscow, which took great pains to develop a Russian museography as early as the mid-nineteenth century, it was not until the 1910s and 1920s that major momentum in elaborating a scientific museology became manifest. This new and, ultimately, Soviet science was to explore and to optimize the museum technologies just as it would implement readable museum narratives.²⁹

The Words and the Things: The Reality Museum

When planning the Ethnographic Museum, all suggestions were definitely related to the discourses about both the formation of scientific ethnography and fledgling museology. One of the central questions was actually about the general status of the museum object and its relation to reality. The physical composition of the object has often been neglected or, at any rate, considered no more than a necessary by-product of the rules of the game within the exhibition area. Notwithstanding that, at least for D.A. Klements, it seemed obvious that the “museum is no book, no textbook [...], but merely an illustrative aid for studying the material relics of everyday life,”³⁰ many museum protagonists still focused instead on the symbolic message these objects conveyed and assumed that ethnographic items were readable in the same way as scientific texts. The arrangement of museum objects was paralleled with the unfolding of a story encapsulated in an abstract idea which could be expressed regardless of the cultural format. Ethnographic

²⁹ A.I. Frolov, “Iz istorii stanovleniia muzeevedencheskikh tsentrov Rossii” [From the history of the foundation of museological centers in Russia], in *Muzei i vlast'. Chast' II. Iz zhizni muzeev. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* [Museum and power. Part 2. From the life of museums. Anthology] (Moscow: NII Kul'tury, 1991), 62–103, here 64–71. See also E.N. Vakulina, “Iz istorii muzeevedcheskoi mysli v Rossii v pervoi treti XX veka” [From the history of museological thinking in Russia in the first third of the twentieth century], in *Muzeinoe delo. Muzeevedenie Rossii v pervoi treti XX v. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* [Museum affairs. Museology in Russia in the first third of the twentieth century. An anthology], no. 24 (Moscow, 1997), 6–28.

³⁰ *Programma dlia sobiraniia etnograficheskikh predmetov. Izdanie etnograficheskago otdela russkago muzeia Imperatora Aleksandra III., 1-e izdanie* [Program for collecting ethnographic objects. Edited by the ethnographic section of the Alexander III Imperial Russian Museum. First edition] (St. Petersburg, 1902), 6.

objects were thought to be naturally endowed with a language that could easily communicate information to the beholder and tell a true story of the Russian Empire. But in fact, the concepts for an exhibition outlined an empire by words, whereas the museum held an empire of objects.

Accordingly, before the ethnographic section of the Russian Museum officially came into being by the tsar's decree in January 1902,³¹ the planning stage had stimulated a broader discussion about its general purpose and the story its exhibits had to tell. These debates reflected the political inclinations of each of the protagonists and equally mirrored the intellectual climate in which specific imperial self-conceptions had gained momentum and made its mark on the museum conception. In particular, the existing academy museum, whose significance had grown under Vasilii V. Radlov (elected director in 1894), decisively influenced the debates about the future profile of the Ethnographic Museum.³² As the academy museum focused mainly on collecting materials from outside the Russian Empire, the Ethnographic Museum should therefore concentrate, so the arguments mostly went, on the Russian Empire in order to avoid conceptual and material overlaps. In 1898, and then in 1901 the Slavophiles Vladimir I. Lamanskii, head of the ethnographic section of the Geographical Society and editor of one of the first and most important ethnographic journals, *Zhivaia starina*, and Ivan N. Smirnov, professor of history in Kazan, created a specific museum design which took up a clearly Russian-centered and nationalist rhetoric.³³ Their suggestions laid the ideological

³¹ Besides the ethnographic section, the Russian Museum also contained one section of fine arts and one dedicated to the memory of Alexander III.

³² For an eulogy on his merits as head of the academy museum, see L. Ia. Shternberg, S.F. Ol'denburg, B.F. Adler, E.L. Petri, Iu. V. Liudevig, and E.M. Romanova, "Muzei Antropologii i Etnografii Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk v period 12 letniago upravleniia V.V. Radlova 1894–1906" [Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in the last twelve years under V.V. Radlov, 1894–1906], in *Ko dnu semidesiatiletii Vasil'ia Vasil'evicha Radlova 5 Ianvaria 1907 goda* [Seventieth anniversary of V.V. Radlov on January 5, 1907] (St. Petersburg: Tip. Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1907), 27–107. For the comprehensive history from its founding in 1714 until the late Soviet era, see T.V. Staniukovich, *Etnograficheskaia nauka i muzei. Po materialam etnograficheskikh muzeev akademii nauk* [Ethnographic science and museums. After materials of the ethnographic museums of the Academy of Sciences], (Leningrad: Nauka, 1978).

³³ Lamanskii was a prominent figure in tsarist geography. See V.P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, "Vladimir Ivanovich Lamanskii kak antropogeograf i politikogeograf" [V.I. Lamanskii as anthropographer and political geographer], *Zhivaia starina* 24 (1915): 9–20; N. Veselovskii, "Deiatel'nost' V.I. Lamanskago v Imperatorskom Russkom Geograficheskom Obshchestve" [The Work of V.I. Lamanskii in the Imperial

foundations for the ultimate decision-making on the new museum section in 1901.

Pondering the proper order of things in the new museum, Lamanskii decisively dismissed a classification according to the material composition of the exhibits, as was applied, for example, in the national museum in Prague.³⁴ Likewise, he rejected dividing the ethnographic items into racial categories, as the *Museum für Völkerkunde* in Berlin did. The former was discarded because of its unsuitability for Russia's multiethnic composition, the latter because of its narrowing perspective. To him only a geographical approach seemed appropriate, because it was only the territory that, as Lamanskii presumed, could absorb and record all features characteristic of the people living on it. To him the territory embodied a virtual repository both of mentalities and practices. The future museum department would detach itself from the "indispensable preconditions" of an ethnographic museum, meaning "clarity and the highest possible approximation of reality," if it neglected the geographical relatedness of ethnographic items. Additionally, for Lamanskii the territory had not only a physical but, more importantly, a historical meaning, since Russia was no "accidental sum of various countries" but "the result, the burdensome fruit of the thousand-year-old historical life of the Russian people (*russskago naroda*)."³⁵ Russia was "the chief architect and keeper of the Russian (*russskago*) state." Moreover, it successfully "spreads Eastern Christendom, the Russian language, the Russian thought [and] the Russian tradition." Hence it is no "mere mechanical composition of different and loosely connected ethnic territories" but a "living historical whole with ancient customs and a centuries-old experience, endued with the consciousness of her dearly purchased victories and full of confidence in her great future." For Lamanskii it was therefore logical that the new museum should not content itself with solely displaying the "tribal variety" of Russia but had to show its "historical unity." So both the arrangement of the ethnographic collections within the museum and the division of Russia

Geographical Society], *Zhivaia starina* 24 (1915): 1–8; see also the recently published article "Lamanskii, Vladimir Ivanovich," in *Slavofily. Istoricheskaiia entsiklopediia* [The Slavophiles. A historical encyclopedia] (Moscow: Institut russkoi tsivilizatsii, 2009), 330–332. About Smirnov, see Robert P. Geraci, *Windows on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 171–176.

³⁴ For Lamanskii's propositions, see Arkhiv Rossiiskogo Etnograficheskogo Muzeia [Archive of the Russian Ethnographic Museum] (henceforth AREM) f. 1, op. 1, d. 6; all quotations in this paragraph refer to ll. 2ob–4.

itself into geographical units necessarily had to follow one thread, binding together all of Russia's historical eras from the very beginning up to the present—and “this thread is the idea of the Russian (*rusaskaia*) nation and state, in other words: the dissemination of the Russian nationality and the building of the Russian state.” From this absolute historical consistency of Russia, and from the supposed political superiority of the Great Russian people, Lamanskii concluded that “all other already outdated historical ideas of an autonomous state, like those of Livonia, Poland, the Armenian and Georgian kingdoms, the Tatar khanates and others, had to be subordinated to the Russian (*ruskuiu*) idea of state and nation.” The geographical grid applied to the museum thus was to visualize the historical and logical coherence of the Russian Empire properly. Yet it goes without saying that such an image could not be conceived other than in hierarchical dependencies, although it was not the classical narration of cultural progress and civilization that primarily influenced Lamanskii's conception, but rather one of a strong state subjugating all particular interests to Russian political dominion. Accordingly, Lamanskii carefully distinguished between the political and, as he called them, ethnographic categories: whereas the historical-political rights of the incorporated ethnic groups could not be given any importance at all because of their potential centrifugal power, he at least conceded “rights to all ethnographic individuals.” But even though he did not emphasize this passage, his double standard is obvious. The non-Russian tribes had the right to exist “ethnographically” but had to refrain from political self-governance. Yet the Russians, due to their historically proven ruling tradition, were well justified as *demos*. Evidently, Lamanskii arranged ethnographic knowledge primarily according to political, but still along schematic national criteria, and in spite of his geographical approach he was still entirely in line with the methodical convention initiated by the Russian Geographical Society in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁵

This nationalist, ethnic-centered rhetoric was taken up and molded into a colonial-missionary narrative by the Kazan professor of history I.N. Smirnov.³⁶ Like Shternberg, he drew heavily upon the evolutionist

³⁵ This parallels the conception of Russia as a national empire. See Mark Bassin, “Geographies of Imperial Identity,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2, *Imperial Russia, 1689–1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 45–63, esp. 55–63.

³⁶ I.N. Smirnov, “Neskol'ko slov po voprosu ob organizatsii etnograficheskogo otdela Russkago muzeia Imperatora Aleksandra III” [Some words about the question of organizing the ethnographic section of the Alexander III Russian Museum], *Izvestiia imperatorskoi akademii nauk* 15, no. 2 (September 1901): 225–237, following quotations 227, 230, 233–234.

agenda. But Smirnov also held that the Russian people were not only of political importance within the Russian Empire, as Lamanskii had previously claimed, but represented “a more and more essential factor in the cultural development of mankind” in general. Thus the future section’s task had to consist of tracing “the preconditions of its genesis” and of disclosing “the worldwide meaning of Russian culture.” Because of its permanent need for new materials to refresh and enrich its collections, the ethnographic museum-to-be was moreover imagined as a “vital laboratory” enhancing its scientific meaning by highlighting the Russian section. But most interestingly, Smirnov also touched upon the basic paradox of ethnographic display—to do justice to the representation of the different ways of life, one had to take into account that everyday life was by no means the “product of the current creative power” of a given people but the result of its historical evolution. Therefore, to understand this phenomenon entirely, the museum ideally had to depict the characteristics of each ethnic group, that is, of each “nationality,” both for the present and in historical perspective, and in so doing it inevitably turned the ethnographic collections into a “cultural-historical monography.”³⁷ Arranging the ethnographic objects according to a synchronic as well as diachronic display principle, Smirnov concluded that such a mode of exposition “gives the visitor a clear idea of why specifically the Russian people subdued various ethnic elements of Russia and what he [the visitor] can expect from them in the future.” Even though Smirnov emphasized the importance of mutual cultural influence between the different cultural groups within the empire, he actually interpreted this influence as a unilateral process, and in so doing he obviously followed the colonial blueprint. Nonetheless, he was more aware than Lamanskii of the meaning of cultural interdependencies between different tribes within a certain geographical area.

Lamanskii’s and Smirnov’s arguments of national supremacy, geographical relativity, and cultural mutuality resurfaced in the official decision-making. To finally establish the Ethnographic Museum, the commission’s members re-examined their assumptions, softened them, and tried

³⁷ The same argument that historians also had to be ethnographers, and vice versa, to grasp entirely the “inner composition” of a people had already been put forward by N.I. Kostomarov, “Ob otnoshenii russkoi istorii k geografii i etnografii” [On the relation of Russian history to geography and ethnography], in *Istoricheskaia monografiia i issledovaniia Nikolaia Kostomarova. Tom tretii. Izdanie vtoroe* [Historical monographs and research of N. Kostomarov, vol. 3, second edition] (St. Petersburg and Moscow: Vol’f, 1880), 375–401, esp. 381–382.

to achieve a scientifically based organization of the museum beyond extreme nationalist interests. Between January and April 1901, several well-known scholars, ethnographers, and museum practitioners discussed the section's outline in three sessions. Under the chairmanship of the Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich convened a group that included the director of the academy museum V.V. Radlov, D.A. Klements, and the aforementioned V.I. Lamanskii, the vice-president of the Academy of Arts Count I.I. Tolstoi, the director of the famous Siberian Minusinsk Museum N.M. Mart'ianov, the literary critic A.N. Pypin, the geographer and vice-president of the Geographical Society P.P. Semenov, the art critic and librarian V.V. Stasov, the ethnographer A.N. Kharuzin, and the anthropologist D.N. Anuchin.³⁸ They were primarily concerned with two questions. First, they wished to resolve the fundamental problem of the specific purpose of the department: whether it should comprise an "ethnography of peoples living within the boundaries of the Russian Empire or a worldwide ethnography."³⁹ And second, they had to decide which arrangement to use for the ethnographic section: it could either be geared to the geographical principle or be organized according to ethnic features.

The resolution for the first question was carried out in intense discussions, and in the end seven out of eleven present members of the committee voted for an "ethnography of the Russian Empire, the adjacent countries, and the Slavs."⁴⁰ This design clearly favored the Slavic element as well as the focus on intra-imperial ethnography, even though the resolution's formulation implied a perception of the extended reach of the empire. In so doing the committee did not question Russia's actual boundaries, of course, but it expressed its specific understanding of cultural transfer processes that had obviously taken place under the tutelage of the Russian *Kulturträger* and which did not end at politically drawn borders but transcended them. Indeed, in following the discussions these processes soon turned out to be an unmistakable manifestation of a cultural hierarchy, as the aforementioned statements of Lamanskii and especially of Smirnov postulated. After Klements made clear at the beginning of the first session that "the most distinguishing feature [of the museum] will be

³⁸ A list of all participants is in AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 9, Otchet o deiatel'nosti muzeia za 1900 [Report on the activities of the museum in 1900], 13–16.

³⁹ The minutes of the three meetings can be found in AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 3–50, quotation here l. 3.

⁴⁰ The votes were from D.A. Klements, V.I. Lamanskii, A.N. Pypin, P.P. Semenov, A.I. Sobolevskii, V.V. Stasov and A.N. Kharuzin; for quotation, see AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 11, l. 37.

the section of Great Russian ethnography, because the Great Russians were, among other things, most significantly affected by European influence,” A.N. Kharuzin picked up Klements’s suggestion and called mainly for broadening the imperial conception. He proposed looking beyond the boundaries and considering all regions where “Russia [had] asserted her cultural-historical influence.”⁴¹ As a consequence, summing up the discussions on this subject, the museum’s annual report for 1901 openly stated that “[m]any of the Slavic countries have and preserve their autonomy only due to the protection of and the communication with Russia.”⁴² The committee’s vision of empire evidently amalgamated political and cultural aspects and connected them with ethnographic features to legitimize imperial difference as well as hegemony.

The discussions about the second question concerning the specific arrangement of the ethnographic objects depended on the parameters the resolution of the first one had established. The commission soon agreed on the partition of the museum collections according to “cultural-geographical regions” into which Russia still had to be divided.⁴³ The members were aware that a mere geographical classification did not suffice to give a comprehensive image of the empire, yet they still considered this principle as most appropriate to grasp the imperial ethnographic-cultural cohesion. To clarify this issue Klements suggested establishing an extra committee consisting of himself, D.A. Koropchevskii, V.I. Lamanskii, and P.P. Semenov and charging it with drawing up reasonable guidelines. Their proposition, however, to divide Russia into twenty-one regions and to partition the museum in as many sections met considerable criticism, particularly because of the unnatural geographical dismemberment of the empire. Even Klements himself showed his discontent with the extra committee’s paper and separately elaborated another outline that again emphasized the need to represent the cultural as well as historical coherence of the empire. To this end he suggested dividing Russia into four greater regions and a total of ten subdivisions. The ethnographic objects, he went on, should be arranged according to the already accepted cultural-geographical principle—this time, however, not considering primarily the ethnic characteristics, but focusing on the general relation between nature and man. Again, the emphasis was actually placed on the Great Russian

⁴¹ Quotations are in AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 11, l. 4ob-5, 8ob.

⁴² AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 9, *Otchet o deiatel'nosti muzeia za 1900–1904* [Report on the activities of the museum 1900–1904], 14.

⁴³ Quotation AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 11, l. 22.

tribe: "If we take," Klements wrote, "the Great Russian tribe and arrange it in a geographical order from the borders of Belorussia and Little Russia, proceeding to the central *gubernii*s eastwards to the Urals, cross the Urals, and move step by step eastwards—before our eyes passes the gradual alteration of the ways of life as well as the adaptations and the images of the life of the Russians." Since all inhabitants of the empire were regarded as "one family," there would be no need to differentiate between Russian and non-Russian ethnographic objects in order to expound the principal developments within the empire. Klements added that precisely by such an unclassified arrangement would "the omnipresent and dominant character of the Russians be expressed." Thus in his vision the diverse exhibits themselves would be able to tell the story of the superiority of the Great Russian civilization regardless of their arrangement, because it was the Russian influence that would necessarily materialize most visibly in all the museum's objects.⁴⁴ True, the museum committee abided by their original cultural-geographical approach and did not fully take up Klements's criticisms, but his division of the empire into four greater regions would be finally applied when he was elected head of the Ethnographic Museum.⁴⁵

On January 10, 1902, the ethnographic section of the Russian Museum was finally founded. It was given a budget of almost 55,000 rubles per year, an incredible amount compared to the academy museum, whose annual funding was only 7,000 rubles. Shortly afterwards, on April 3, E.A. Liatskii, N.M. Mogilianskii, and K.A. Inostrantsev were appointed ethnographic curators, and on April 23, D.A. Klements was elected director of the section.⁴⁶ The museum's program, announced by Klements immediately after his appointment, once again made clear that the Russian people was the center of both the museum's research interests and its collecting activities. In so doing, the newly founded museum fully responded to the supposedly widespread curiosity, and thus the common point of view, concerning primarily Russian life and its development.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ For this document, see the archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies (Institut vostokovedeniia) of the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institut vostochnykh rukopisei (henceforth IVR) f. 28, op. 1, d. 197, ll. 23–30ob, quotations l. 27–27ob.

⁴⁵ This was the decision the council (*sovet*) of the ethnographic section made shortly after the appointment of the museum staff. See AREM, f. 1, op. 1, d. 14, l. 44.

⁴⁶ AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 14, l. 40.

⁴⁷ Dubov, "U istokov rossiiskogo etnograficheskogo muzeia," here 114–115.

The Things and the Numbers: Organizing Museum Procedures

For Klements the museum had an all-embracing significance—it was not only fundamental for scientific research but also necessary for “practical life.”⁴⁸ Such pedagogical targets fit right in with the broader discourse circulating in the last decades within the post-emancipation elites, where illiteracy and the low standard of education were blamed for Russia’s backwardness. Aware of the museum’s specific mission, Klements now gave self-education itself a dual meaning—the museum’s ethnographic objects not only raised the level of education in general terms but informed the audience about itself by showing its very own customs, traditions, and habits. Ethnographic exhibits turned into a visual equipment for ethnic consciousness.⁴⁹ To Klements this self-objectivation could theoretically be guaranteed only by digging to the roots and, in practice, by displaying “the man and the people fabricating this or that artifact.” The ethnographic value of these artifacts could come to light solely if they were not tainted by civilizing achievements. If a peasant, for example, wore a machine-made shirt, it would be sufficient for an ethnographic museum to show this shirt without its mechanical context of production and distribution. In fact, the ethnographic museum, in Klements’s vision, should exclusively consist of what “a peasant produces for everyday life with his [own] implements.”⁵⁰ Therefore, right after his appointment he issued a collection program serving the employees of the section as a practical manual and which was also distributed to numerous provincial institutions as well as to amateur collectors all over the empire. To ensure a conceptual coherence for the objects, this program consisted of guidelines dividing the gathered material into eight main classification groups: ethnographic objects of dwelling, clothing and decoration, the tools and equipment of everyday life, diet, professions and industry, family life, superstition, and traditional medicine.⁵¹ Interestingly, this division into eight groups did not fully correspond to the quasi-obligatory nineteenth-century references for classification of ethnographic objects elaborated by Gustav Klemm, Otis T. Mason, and

⁴⁸ Klements, *Mestnye muzei i ikh znachenie*, 3.

⁴⁹ The aforementioned Lamanskii had labeled this effect somewhat differently as “people’s love for themselves” (*narodnoe samoliubie*); see AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 6, l. 3ob.

⁵⁰ Quotations from Kondakov, “D.A. Klements,” 50; for a brief summary of this discussion, see AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 11, l. 5.

⁵¹ *Programma dlia sobiraniia etnograficheskikh predmetov*. Two more editions of this pamphlet were published within the following five years.

Augustus H.L.F. Pitt Rivers, who had also considered weapons, music instruments, coins, and written records.⁵²

In the late 1840s and 1850s, Karl Ernst von Baer and Nikolai I. Nadezhdin had already directed their attention to the elaboration of classification systems for the completion of the Geographical Society's ethnographic collection, and such detailed instructions had also been released for the 1867 ethnographic exposition in Moscow.⁵³ Nevertheless, it was not until the end of the century that collecting became a thoroughly systematized and a theoretically substantiated occupation. It was in this period that an increasing scientific understanding of collecting and displaying ethnographic objects emerged.⁵⁴ Concurrent with the first institutionalization of anthropology in a university in the 1880s, renowned scholars-ethnographers such as D.N. Anuchin, A.P. Bogdanov, and I.N. Smirnov and the literary critic A.N. Pypin now emphasized that a museum exhibit essentially had to serve scientific purposes and had to turn into an object of methodical research. Nadezhdin's scientific program to find out the "very truth of Russian nationality" was still clearly discernible at the turn

⁵² Augustus H.L.F. Pitt Rivers, "On the Principles of Classification Adopted in the Arrangement of His Anthropological Collection, Now Exhibited in the Bethnal Green Museum," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute for Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 6 (1874): 298–308; Otis T. Mason, "Méthode de la classification dans les musées d'ethnographie," *Revue d'Ethnographie*, no. 6 (1887): 239–242. A general discussion of the classification systems applied to ethnographic expositions in nineteenth-century Europe; see Nélia Dias, *Le musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro. Anthropologie et muséologie en France* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1991), esp. 115–162. For a criticism by V.V. Radlov of Klements's program, see AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 17, ll. 1–2.

⁵³ *Instruktsii sobiraniia predmetov dlia russkoi etnograficheskoi vystavki v Moskve uchrezhdaemykh Obshchestvom liubitelei estestvoznaniia, sostojashchim pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom universitete. (Iz istorii obshchestva, T. II. Obshchiia instruktsii dlia antropologicheskikh nabludenii)* [Instructions for collecting objects for the ethnographic exposition in Moscow organized by the Society of Lovers of Natural Science at the Imperial Moscow University (From the history of the Society. Volume 2. General instructions for anthropological observations) (Moscow, 1865). For the early activities of the Geographical Society in this respect, see Z.D. Titova, *Etnografiia v deiatel'nosti russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva 1845–1917 gg. (Iz istorii etnografii v Rossii)* [Ethnography and the activities of the Russian Geographical Society, 1845–1917 (from the history of ethnography in Russia)]. Avtoreferat (Leningrad, 1954), 7–11.

⁵⁴ This anthropologically motivated drive of scientification of the object went so far that, for example, in the context of the establishment of the *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* 1886 in Berlin "the anthropological gaze [...] transformed the commodities and curiosities of the metropolis, even pornography, into scientific evidence." See Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), esp. 172–198, quote on 174.

of the century. The suggestion of V.V. Stasov, member of the founding committee of the Ethnographic Museum, to complete the collection by simply adopting the template elaborated for the exposition in 1867, which had focused primarily on the Russian *ethnos*, again demonstrated the persistence of the ethnic-nationalist paradigm.⁵⁵

A substantial shift toward the scientification of museological processing can be observed in the endeavors to generally systematize data search—at the turn of the century expeditions gradually became the most important tool for procuring ethnographic materials. A shift in the quality of the collected objects can also be observed. While in 1863 the collecting guidelines for the ethnographic division of the Geographical Society focused on items of folk art and particularly their festive elements, the program for the 1867 exposition already widened the range of objects and tried to include pieces of everyday life. This broadened understanding of ethnographic objects had a constitutive role for the following collecting programs.⁵⁶ On the whole, by the end of the century, the collections had officially been converted into reservoirs of ethnic-historical knowledge for ethnographic research—both in the academy museum and the Ethnographic Museum.⁵⁷ Eager to reveal the archaic, unspoiled origins of a

⁵⁵ For Stasov, see AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 80b–90b.

⁵⁶ See, for example, the program of the Geographical Society in the 1880s: *Programma dlia sobiraniia svedenii po etnografii* [Program for collecting ethnographic materials] (St. Petersburg, 188?); *Programma dlia sobiraniia etnograficheskikh materialov k vystavke na predstoiashchem v 1902 g. v Khar'kove XII arkheologicheskomo s'ezde* [Program for collecting ethnographic materials for the forthcoming exposition in 1902 in Kharkov' at the Thirteenth Archaeological Meeting] (Khar'kov: Tip. K.N. Gagarina, 1900); *Programma dlia sobiraniia svedenii arkheologicheskikh, istoricheskikh i etnograficheskikh po saratovskoi gubernii* [Program for collecting archaeological, historical, and ethnographic materials in the Saratov guberniia] (Saratov: Tipografiia sojuza pechatnogo dela, 1910). A brief overview can be found in N.I. Ivanovskaia, "Iz istorii sobiratel'skikh programm po etnografii (seredina XIX–seredina XX vv.)" [From the history of collecting programs in ethnography (mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century)], in *Problemy komplektovaniia, nauchnogo opisaniia i atributsii etnograficheskikh pamiatnikov. Sbornik nauchnikh trudov* [Problems of completion, scientific description, and attribution of ethnographic monuments. An anthology] (Leningrad: Gos-muzei etnografii narodov SSSR, 1987), 86–92, esp. 87–89.

⁵⁷ This meaning is still relevant at the end of the twentieth century: "Only ethnographic expositions make it possible to retain the genetic code of historical ethno-cultural memory [...]." See A.M. Reshetov, "Rol' etnograficheskikh muzeev v sokhranении i propagande etnokul'turnykh traditsii," in *Problemy razvitiia kul'tury narodov i izucheniia kul'tury po muzeinym kollektsiiam. Vsesoiuznaia nauchnaia konferentsiia "Etnograficheskaja nauka i propaganda etnograficheskikh znaniu," posviashchennaia 70-*

culture, both institutions drew their materials exclusively from the peasant world.

The Ethnographic Museum procured its ethnographic materials mainly in two ways. One was by sending specific expeditions, as it did, for example, in the very first years of its existence, to the Caucasus, to the steppe region, to the Crimea, to Belarus, to Ukraine and to the central region of European Russia. The other was by entrusting locals to spot and collect ethnographic objects and, if necessary, to purchase them on behalf of the museum from regional collectors. In some cases these collectors generously handed over their treasures to the museum, even for free. What was challenging, however, was the evident lack of a scientifically trained staff to accomplish this mission. In a narrower sense, as already mentioned, all the Russian ethnographers were actually autodidacts, and few could boast a university diploma in ethnography. Courses in ethnography as an independent subject did not exist in Russia, either in universities or in higher school education.⁵⁸ Only a few, such as Nikolai Kharuzin and his sister Vera Kharuzina, could afford to go abroad. They went to Paris in the early 1890s and attended lectures given by prominent anthropologists such as Charles Letourneau and Gabriel de Mortillet.⁵⁹ As a result, the qualification of the museum's middle and lower echelons was fairly poor. In addition, the ambitious collection program Klements had outlined was severely hampered by the staff's limited number. Although Klements strove indefatigably to acquire ethnographic objects from all over the empire's territory, under these circumstances he could not cover all regions equally. But there were still several other factors that significantly influenced the composition of the museum collection. Aside from the general deficiency of the personnel, there were obviously the specific features characterizing each district. Some areas were rich in ethnographic objects, while others

letiiu Velikogo Oktiabria. Tezisy dokladov [Problems of the cultural development of peoples and research on culture with the help of museum collections. All-Soviet scientific conference "Ethnographic Science and Propaganda of Ethnographic Knowledge," dedicated to the seventieth anniversary of the Great October] (Omsk: OmGU, 1987), 51–53, quote on 52.

⁵⁸ This was the predicament and standard complaint of the Russian ethnographers, most prominently voiced by Lev Ia. Shternberg. See his sketches kept in the archive of the St. Petersburg branch of the Academy of Sciences (S. Peterburgskii filial arkhiva rossiiskoi akademii nauk, henceforth SPF ARAN) f. 282, op. 1, d. 29, ll. 1–7.

⁵⁹ See Nathaniel Knight, "Nikolai Kharuzin and the Quest for a Universal Human Science: Anthropological Evolutionism and the Russian Ethnographic Tradition, 1885–1900," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 83–111, here 93.

had fewer. Some regions' genuine material traditions were exceptionally well-documented, while others, for various reasons, could not conserve them and showed strong influences from other cultures. And, finally, sometimes the museum's envoys found getting access to the ethnographic objects exceedingly difficult. Obviously, carrying out Klements's original idea of furnishing the museum comprehensively with materials met with several serious practical obstacles that thwarted the principal work of the local and central museum staff members, but it actually had an undeniable effect on the very design of the museum collection itself. Given the idealistic plan of a complete collection, it was no wonder that the former hope of building up a museum that would be able to present the whole empire was gradually given up. Klements came to realize that the presentation of the empire was largely dependent on the very natural and technical parameters of collecting and purchasing.

Nevertheless, by 1910 the Ethnographic Museum had acquired more than 30,000 items explicitly connected with Russian culture procured by the museum staff itself, by additionally dispatched professional ethnographers as well as by local residents and collectors working for the museum.⁶⁰ Since the total of all donated and purchased objects amounted to nearly 92,000 items, the Great Russian section made up merely a third. In addition, the Little Russian section consisted of almost 8,100 pieces and that of Belarus 3,400, so at least the whole Slavic part constituted approximately 45 percent of the museum inventory. As regards non-Russian tribes, it obtained more than 40,000 objects from within the empire and nearly 9,500 items from adjacent countries. The collected objects had origins ranging from the spheres of agriculture and livestock farming through artisanry, religious, and musical instruments to medicine, but about 70 percent of the objects actually consisted of male and female clothing.⁶¹ Yet their geographical distribution was also uneven. The museum's richest Russian collections covered the northern and southern regions of European Russia, whereas those of the northeast, the central *gu-*

⁶⁰ For a detailed list of the persons involved and their specific activities in completing the museum's collections, see N.M. Mogilianskii, "Etnograficheskii Otdel Russkago Muzeia Imperatora Aleksandra III" [Ethnographic section of the Alexander III Russian Museum], *Zhivaia starina* 20, no. 1 (1911): 473–498, esp. 481–487. For the following figures, see *ibid.*, 489.

⁶¹ I.I. Shangina, *Russkii fond etnograficheskikh muzeev Moskvy i Sankt-Peterburga. Istoriia i problemy komplektovaniia. 1867–1930 gg.* [Russian inventory of the ethnographic museums in Moscow and St. Petersburg. History and problems of completion, 1867–1930] (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskii etnograficheskii muzei, 1994), 33–70.

berniias, and the Urals and Siberia were less well-stocked. This fact was due to the aforementioned unfavorable circumstances of acquisition, which were beyond any scientific ambition but nevertheless significant for the specific composition of the collection. But at least the museum could in part comply with the demands of E.A. Liatskii, one of its first three announced curators. Early on he had realized the institution's restricted possibilities due to Russia's still-lacking scientific as well as museum culture. In a session of the department council on January 25, 1903, he had admitted that given Russia's vast territory, combined with the low level of staff coverage, the museum could only focus on "a certain group of ethnographic units by direct personal scrutiny."⁶² Of course, this was a serious scientific statement, but it was also a concession to Russia's current scientific museological conditions.

Yet to keep a museum going, it was actually not enough to collect and purchase objects. One of its main tasks, furthermore, consisted of organizing the accumulated materials by deploying specific techniques of registering and storing. A classification system was fundamental for the museum's work, inasmuch as it enabled the staff to find and locate individual objects and to make them available for scientific research. This art of counting, classifying, and labeling, however, could have been acquired by scholars in Russia only partly. Even though those involved with the museum in the early stages tried to establish a kind of incipient museum culture in the provinces from the 1870s on—such as Klements did in Minusinsk—outside the capitals these efforts mostly seemed to be in vain and hardly constituted the development of a professional Russian museography. This process started tentatively, as we have seen, and not until the 1910s. Therefore, those responsible for Petersburg's ethnographic museums had to rely on the experiences recorded in museums abroad. Scarcely had Klements been appointed to head the ethnographic section when he set off on a journey through several European museum centers such as Helsingfors, Stockholm, Bremen, Hamburg, Zurich, Munich, Nuremberg, Dresden, Prague, Belgrade, and Bucharest and gathered data on the methods of organizing and structuring the ethnographic collections.⁶³ This collated information, however, did not merely refer to the issue of classification but also related to several other museum fields. This could be seen in the manual compiled by one of the curators, F.K. Volkov, who had helped to organize the trip of Nikolai M. Mogilianskii—at that time still curator,

⁶² AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 13, l. 75ob.

⁶³ AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 14, l. 50.

too—to Sweden, Norway, and Denmark in 1906. It consisted of detailed instructions grouped into four sections and including questions first of administration and personnel, second of thematic and scientific issues (whether ethnography should consider, for example, archaeological finds), of the general equipment of museums (laboratories, libraries, catalogs, etc.), and finally of the collections themselves (registration of the objects, storage, construction of the cabinets, exhibition spaces, techniques of displaying, preservation, etc.). Thematically, Mogilianskii's interest was not only focused on ethnographic issues but generally embraced the spheres of cultural as well as art history and also pertained to other related disciplines. Still, his main objective was to generally familiarize himself better with the principal character of practical museum work.⁶⁴ It was considered necessary to adjust and improve the very basic museum procedures and, of course, to establish contacts with other museum professionals abroad.⁶⁵ Essential in this respect, however, was to find an appropriate principle to organize and register the museum objects according to consistent scientific standards.

After exhaustive examination Klements and his colleagues finally came to a decision and opted for the "Stockholm system" by slightly modifying it to their particular needs. Naturally, through the task of *storing* the Russian Empire, the classification system produced another concept of order than the museum's program of cultural-geographical arrangement had done for the exhibitionary complex. The "Stockholm system" did not record the objects strictly by the territory where they stemmed from, but by the collections they belonged to.⁶⁶ The same could be observed in the academy museum where, in turn, the "Copenhagen system" was being applied, which similarly sorted the recorded objects not by regions but by collection entities.⁶⁷ This recording principle, which, in the first place, actually established the gathered materials as real and veritable ethnographic objects, obviously was not specifically conceived

⁶⁴ AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 34, ll. 7–17ob, 41–59 ob. For the catalog resulting from this, the registration system as well as the furnishings, see IVR f. 28, op. 1, d. 201.

⁶⁵ Perceiving themselves as part of a European intellectual elite as well as of the scientific community, most of the Russian ethnographers had frequent contact with their colleagues abroad. See, for example, the voluminous correspondence of Lev Ia. Shternberg, who exchanged fifty-four letters with Franz Boas in New York alone, SPF ARAN f. 282, op. 2, d. 29.

⁶⁶ AREM f. 1, op. 1, d. 9, l. 12.

⁶⁷ Shternberg, "Muzei Antropologii i Etnografii," 460–461; SPF ARAN f. 142, op. 1, d. 45, here l. 4.

for ethnographic museums. Instead it was a universal parameter that could be applied variably—in national, imperial, or colonial museum contexts. Thus the manageability of these objects, as well as their general accessibility through the “Stockholm system,” were not dependent on the outward or ideological appearance of the Russian Empire, as was the case for the exhibition part of the museum. The registration system by collections was also not internally consistent, but it produced further criteria that the ethnographic objects were also subjected to. These included ethnic criteria, as was represented by the imperial collections of the Inuit, the Aleut, and the Tlingit handed over to the museum by the tsar; or by the collection of N.L. Shabel’skii, consisting solely of Great Russian embroidery. Other objects could be categorized by geographical features, as suggested by the purchased Chinese collection of A.V. Vereshchagin or Lieutenant General A.A. Bogoliubov’s carpet collection from Central Asia. Furthermore one could find religious criteria, as expressed, for instance, by the Buddhist collection of E.E. Ukhomskii. Finally, even the common material structure could denote a separate class, as was the case with the spoon collection of Count Obolenskii.⁶⁸ Of course, all the stored objects were definitely imperial, but the registration system only created a correlation between single objects and a certain group of objects based mostly, remarkably enough, on specific exterior features. For what is striking here is that it was actually the physical composition or similarity of the objects that largely regulated the order of the museum’s storeroom. It was literally the basement of the Ethnographic Museum which actually contained the museum objects’ materiality, albeit not entirely. By becoming countable and storable, the ideological power of imperial cohesion now shifted to a mere numerical relation—the scientific availability of imperial objects was not necessarily connected to a specific image the latter could produce. In a way, the storage facilities of the Ethnographic Museum kept the secret as well as the predicament of the transformative power of the museum techniques, because it was precisely here that the Russian Empire could truly be presented in its very difference but, in return, was equally deprived of the possibility of being *represented*. If empire is considered an ideology, then the order implemented in the basements of the Ethnographic Museum certainly was beyond empire.

⁶⁸ For the collections, see Mogilianskii, “Etnograficheskii Otdel Russkago Muzeia,” 489–490.

Exhibiting Action: Arrangement of Empire

The Ethnographic Museum did not open its gates to the public permanently until June 1923, although the official opening had been planned for 1916. The reason was that the design and construction of the first building to be put up was entrusted to the architect Vasilii F. Svin'in. Boasting that he had used exclusively Russian materials and labor force, he took until 1915 to finish the museum's edifice.⁶⁹ Further delay was caused by the outbreak of World War I and later on by the devastating civil war ravaging many parts of Russia. Interestingly, the museum conception elaborated around the turn of the century was fully applied when the permanent exhibition was created under Soviet rule.⁷⁰ Initial reactions to the museum were mostly favorable, but within a couple of years the Soviet regime, not surprisingly, rearranged the exhibition and eliminated the imperial legacy by aligning the museum's activities with Marxist doctrine.⁷¹ Yet the imperial museum curators indeed had the opportunity also to test their concept beforehand and had organized two small expositions that were not open to the public but were mainly accessible to a fairly limited number of viewers, mostly professionals. At the end of 1909, the museum first arranged a presentation of Christian antiquity that was visited by only 545 people. Soon afterward, in 1910, more than 1,000 visitors came to an exhibition, this one more generally focused on imperial everyday life as well as on the history of art and archaeology.⁷² Since the latter had been labeled *otchetnaia vystavka*, we can assume that the curators' intention was to present the breadth of the section's actual collections. The same could be read in the accompanying report on the exhibition, which stressed that the newly "assembled collections represent the continuation of the systematic collecting that started in 1902."⁷³

⁶⁹ *Rossiiskii etnograficheskii muzei 1902–2002* [Russian Ethnographic Museum, 1902–2002], 13.

⁷⁰ *Etnograficheskii otdel russkogo muzeia* [Ethnographic section of the Russian museum] (Petrograd: Sovet Russkogo Muzeia, 1923); *Russkii muzei. Otchetnaia vystavka etnograficheskogo otdela za 1923 goda* [Russian museum. Exposition of the ethnographic section in 1923] (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1924).

⁷¹ Francine Hirsch, "Getting to Know 'The Peoples of the USSR': Ethnographic Exhibits as Soviet Virtual Tourism, 1923–1934," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 4 (2003): 683–709; more detailed in Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, esp. 187–227; Baranov, "Etnograficheskii muzei," 33–41.

⁷² Mogilianskii, "Etnograficheskii Otdel Russkago Muzeia," 494–495.

⁷³ The following is based on *Otchetnaia vystavka za 1910 g. sobramnykh Etnograficheskim Otdelom Russkago Muzeia Imperatora Aleksandra III etnograficheskikh kollektsii* [Exposition in 1910 of the ethnographic collections by the ethnographic section of the Alexander III Russian Museum] (St. Petersburg: Tipo-litografiia Energiia, 1910), quotation 1.

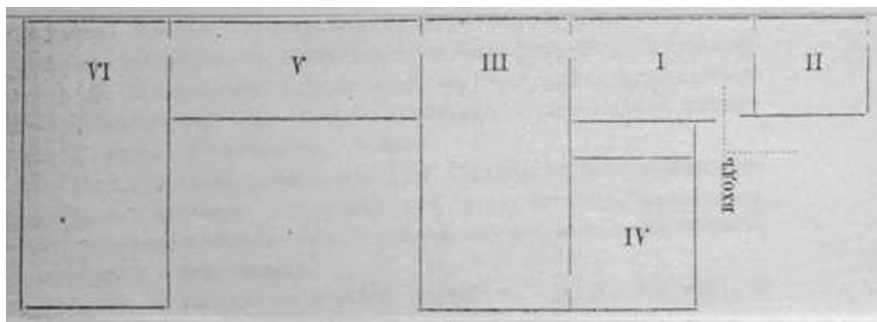


Fig. 1. Source: *Otchetnaia vystavka za 1910 g. sobrannykh Etnograficheskikh Otdelom Russkago Muzeia Imperatora Aleksandra III etnograficheskikh kollektsii*, St. Petersburg 1910, p. 2.

The exposition was presented in six out of a total of twenty-three rooms of the museum building. Entering the first, the visitor faced materials of European Russia, including collections of the central regions, of Arkhangel'sk and also of the Donskoi *oblast*, supplemented by objects from Finland and Norway. Taking the right door, one came into the second hall, likewise furnished with materials of European Russia. Here one could find embroideries, clothes and everyday objects from Eastern European regions such as around Viatka, Kazan, Penza, or Tambov. Similarly the finds of archaeological excavations at Nova Ladoga in northern Russia were displayed. To get into the third hall, one had to go back and had to traverse the first hall to the door opposite. Here were displayed several items of Siberian peoples like the Voguls (Mansi), the Ostyaks (Khanty), or the Samoeds, including, alongside the everyday gadgets, equipment for hunting, fishing, or religious worship. There were also several items from the Chinese living in the Siberian Far East along the Ussuriysk River. Next to it the fourth hall was likewise dedicated to exposing everyday life and cult objects of the non-Russian tribes, including the Kalmyk, Buryat, Mongolian, Chinese, and even Japanese peoples. Further on, one entered the fifth hall, which again covered European Russia, this time exhibiting various objects of the Latvians, the Lithuanians, the Poles, and the Belarusians, as well as showing handicrafts and costumes from southern regions such as Volhynia, Ekaterinoslav, and Kherson. Finally, the sixth hall consisted of an array of collections mainly of Persian and Turkish craftwork and commodities, as well as a number of relics of several Caucasian peoples.

At first blush, concerning the spatial arrangement of the exhibition, there is no rigorously structured concept: European Russia, Siberia, and

the adjacent countries were shown in a somewhat loose and virtually haphazard connection to each other, and the arrangement, not coincidentally, reminds us of Klements's separately conceived concept of an exhibition organized not along ethnic criteria but along the very nature of the objects themselves (which, as we remember, should reveal the natural Russian dominance as a matter of course). And indeed, after a second glance it becomes clear that the ethnographic materials were often assembled after the political territories Russia was divided into, irrespective of the ethnic group. So for example, in the first hall are collections concerning the Russians from the Arkhangel'sk or Vologda *gubernii*s, whereas in the second hall are also found non-Russian objects, for instance, of the Cheremis (Mari) residing in the *gubernii*s of Viatka and Kazan. This, moreover, similarly applied to the Siberian section, where the items, for example, of the Voguls were geographically confined to the *guberniia* of Tobol'sk. Of course, particularly in the fourth and sixth halls, there was also an arrangement of non-Russian objects that did not coincide with the political-administrative grid of the Russian Empire but was instead categorized by mere ethnic features. Yet on the whole, it appears that the specific order of the exhibited objects largely emerged from the practical reasons for collecting the materials and automatically compartmentalized the museum in political units which, in turn, reflected imperial statehood. If we recall the plans of the committee planning the Ethnographic Museum, where the cultural predominance and influence of the Russian people on the non-Russians was considered crucial, this dominance was expressed here at best by the mere quantitative preponderance of the Great Russian material. The coherence between the objects, however, did not necessarily correspond to the quasi-colonial narrative of Russian cultural supremacy that was originally intended, so that the cohesion of the Russian Empire was represented not by a concept, but rather by the factual presence of the objects. Furthermore, this exhibitionary order, obviously staging statehood as imperial bond, could only be perceived when the visitor looked at the labels of each exhibit to learn where the exhibits were actually from—thus, to tell the imperial story of Russian supremacy was theoretically impossible without adding another supplementary narrative.

How was the exhibition received? Unfortunately, for this period there were, at least to my knowledge, no records of the average visitor to the Ethnographic Museum. After the official opening in 1923, comment books were laid out encouraging museumgoers to write down their impressions, possibly to voice criticisms or simply to inspire improve-

ments.⁷⁴ From the late tsarist period a comment book of the academy museum has survived, but the quality of an ordinary entry put down between 1899 and 1917 is fairly modest. Aside from date, name, and region of origin, most entries do not contain any other useful information about the visitor.⁷⁵ The Ethnographic Museum's 1910 exhibition in turn might not have attracted the interest of the average Russian that much, not least because mostly professionals were admitted. Nevertheless it was the intelligentsia who energetically took part in this imperial exhibitionary venture. One of its representatives and actually one of the visitors of the museum, Vladimir V. Bogdanov, was the scientific secretary of the ethnographic section of the "Society of Lovers of Natural Science, Anthropology, and Ethnography" (*Obshchestvo liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii*) at that time and has left records providing detailed insights into the incipient museological as well as ethnographic pre-revolutionary theater in St. Petersburg. In his records he touched upon this exhibition.⁷⁶

His judgments of it, though, were fairly critical. His first impressions were positive, especially concerning the exposition's external appearance—for example, the architectural arrangement of the halls or the artistic presentation of the ethnographic objects in glass cabinets. But going into detail, he revealed major deficiencies of the display, and in so doing he likewise touched upon the fundamental problem: that visualized presentations could in the best case only partially absorb textually conceived narratives. In this respect, however, his criticism was devastating, even though it might not have been intended to be. To begin with, after visiting the museum several times, he became convinced that "a lot of objects were collected by inexperienced people" who, in many cases, had given the museum exhibits—particularly the costumes, cloths, and embroideries—incorrect labels and classifications. Furthermore, because of the aforementioned lack of personnel

⁷⁴ Hirsch, "Getting to Know 'The Peoples of the USSR,'" 701–703.

⁷⁵ SPF ARAN f. 142, op. 1, d. 36, ll. 1–114ob.

⁷⁶ Bogdanov, born in 1868, was in contact with many of the significant Russian ethnographers soon after his appointment as scientific secretary of the OLEAE in 1894. After the revolution he established the Museum of the Central Industrial Region in Moscow in 1919. Later he worked in the capital's Central Museum of Folklore (Tsentral'nii muzei narodovedeniia), heading the department of Eastern Slavs. Until his death in 1949, he actively took part in pedagogical teaching as well as in museum and in ethnographic fieldwork in several regions of European Russia. The following quotations refer to his records published under V.V. Bogdanov, *Muzeinaia etnografiia*. (*Glavy iz knigi "Etnografiia v istorii moei zhizni"*) [Museological ethnography (chapters from the book "Ethnography in the history of my life")] (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 1993), esp. 37–44.

(Klements and his three ethnographic curators had to run the whole museum machinery by themselves) Bogdanov was not surprised that the “fundamental principle of ethnographic fieldwork [...] as it was correctly expounded by L. Ia. Shternberg [...] had been violated.” Furthermore, the expedition activities of the Ethnographic Museum were not harmonized with the academy museum’s ventures. Thus, due to unnecessary rivalry between the two museums, several collections appeared twice,⁷⁷ even though the conception of the Ethnographic Museum, as we have seen, was outlined precisely to prevent such overlaps. Hence, for the visitor, Bogdanov went on, it was not clear “what exactly was the difference between one museum and the other.” Aside from the missing specific profile, he also criticized the fact that the Ethnographic Museum’s collections, which Mogilianskii optimistically suggested should cover the entire empire,⁷⁸ could not be as comprehensive as intended, either in the exhibition space or in the museum basement, where the gathered materials had not even been fully registered. However, the exhibition’s “main defect” lay not in “the absence of this or that nationality in the exhibition rooms” but in the “fragmentary nature of the everyday complex of objects [*bytovogo kompleksa veshchei*] for each nationality.” Even for the Russian sections there was “no comprehensive portrait of their villages, yards, houses, and stables,” and the same was true of the Ukrainian and Belarusian sections, not to mention those of the other nationalities. Moreover, the exhibition, he noted, “was a slave to the archaic culture” and did not consider cultural stages ensuing from it (with the exception of the Great Russian and Ukrainian costumes), so that the historical processes of transfer, appropriations, and adaptations were totally obscured. Furthermore, the many mannequins—again!—used in the exhibition as material manifestations of particular peoples were fabricated, but in quite an abstract form. Even though they were dressed in traditional garments characteristic of each nationality, their appearance was somewhat unsettling, if not ridiculous, because it was so simple: their construction consisted merely of a “stand on three feet having neither arms nor

⁷⁷ As is shown by—to give only one example—the Slavic collections of the academy museum: see T.V. Staniukovich, “K istorii komplektovaniia vostochnoslavianskogo fonda MAE” [On the history of the completion of the East Slavic inventory of the MAE], in *Sobraniia Muzeia antropologii i etnografii AN SSSR. K 100-letiiu obrazovaniia pervogo akademicheskogo etnograficheskogo tsentra* [Collections of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the AN SSSR. Centennial celebration of the foundation of the first academic ethnographic center] (*Sbornik Muzeia antropologii i etnografii* 35) (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980), 10–16.

⁷⁸ Mogilianskii, “Etnograficheskii Otdel Russkago Muzeia,” 498.

legs, only a neutral cloth head with painted-on standard eyes, lips, and noses.” For a scientist such a presentation might be acceptable, because he could imagine the costumes on the real persons. But the average visitor, as Bogdanov observed, was discontent with this kind of formalistic and abstract representation and “would like to see the mannequins in their [real] plastic form.” The clarity with which the museum presented each nationality was obviously impaired by the minimalistic and even negligent mode of presentation. By attacking head-on this missing clarity, and by implication the museum exhibits’ missing authenticity, Bogdanov unconsciously contested the intended imperial functioning of the Ethnographic Museum’s exhibition area in general.



Fig. 2. Source: Arkhiv Rossiiskogo Etnograficheskogo Muzeia, Photography 1911

Of course, Bogdanov’s criticisms were formulated from an explicitly scientific view and, moreover, partly bore an ideological bias, due to the Soviet context in which he wrote.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, it is remarkable that the

⁷⁹ Accordingly, he also made the typical Soviet criticism that, for example, the “social character of everyday life has been omitted from the museum display.” Bogdanov, *Muzeinaia etnografiia*, 43.

main reproach the Soviets directed like a mantra against the tsarist regime, of deepening imperial hierarchies and of fostering imperialism, was actually missing. One could object that the exhibition was a partial failure merely as a result of the incomplete collections and the incompetence of the museum personnel, which would not seriously challenge the general practicability of the museum idea to represent the Russian Empire. But this would imply two things: first, that the museum could achieve a state of comprehensiveness, which, as all the contemporaries engaged in museum work both in Russia and abroad knew, was unrealistic. But second, and much more serious, it implied that all those involved acted on an assumption that was, as seen above, taken for granted—the museum would help visitors understand ethnographic difference as well as cultural dominance. But obviously, following Bogdanov's observations and descriptions, it was the other way round: if the Russian *ethnos* had to be perceived as the prevailing cultural element within the Russian Empire, the average museumgoer necessarily had to have a specific imperial image *before* entering the museum rooms that would only enable him to actually recognize himself and the imperial others. Bogdanov's statements do not give a real indication of imperial consciousness, either in his case or the non-scientist's case; apparently, the imperial self seemed irrelevant. And even the aforementioned entries in the comment books of the 1920s did not convincingly hint at an imperial or anti-imperial attitude, or at least at an understanding of the visitor that would approve the museum's original intention. But what is more, the specific arrangement of the ethnographic objects obviously could not even *incite* an imperial consciousness and generate a recognition of the (ethnic) self. The ethnographic objects remained objects in spite of their arrangement; they did not talk either in Russian or in another spoken language. But what they did was to represent a kind of equality or democracy among themselves: as it were, the museum's basement ascended to the exhibition area. And in so doing it seems probable that for any visitor, any object, nearly regardless of its arrangement, simply displayed the Other. It would be too much to say that the Ethnographic Museum created a kind of imperial self-Orientalism,⁸⁰ but what the Ethnographic Museum certainly produced at its early stage was both a defamiliarization of imperial ideology and a physical manifestation of imperial variety.

⁸⁰ Baranov, "Etnograficheskii muzei."

Conclusion

If we go back to the quotes by Nikolai M. Mogilianskii and Dmitrii A. Klements at the beginning that the museum objects were vital and the museum itself had to be considered a vibrant laboratory, it is amazing what powerful and modern designations these contemporaries offered to grasp the significance as well as the mechanics of the ethnographic museum and what short-sighted conclusions they drew from it. Indeed, to them ethnographic knowledge was tantamount to political imperial knowledge. Thus they simply recounted the narrative of a successful Russian cultural expansion, or at least dominance, by accumulating, categorizing, and exhibiting its objects. Of course, the ties between empire and ethnography were strong.⁸¹ Both seemed to express a kind of modern control of the other in which ethnography could appear as the vulgar scientific justification of colonial superiority,⁸² so that the ethnographic museums were obviously regarded as a mere extension of ethnographic science and a favorable method for disseminating ethnographic and/or imperial knowledge. Their sensory nature, as well as their clarity, equipped the objects with an ostensible authenticity that already seemed sufficient to convey a story of irrefutable truth about the imperial Other. Accordingly, the objects' "aliveness" was related to their ability to communicate as a language does; but, as we have seen, they evidently did not. Rather, they

⁸¹ See, for example, Catherine B. Clay, "Russian Ethnographers in the Service of Empire, 1856–1862," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 45–61. For the interrelation between ethnographic knowledge and imperial power, see the debate in these articles: Nathaniel Knight, "Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851–1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?" *Slavic Review* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 74–100; Adeeb Khalid, "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 4 (2000): 691–699; Nathaniel Knight, "On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 4 (2000): 701–715; Nathaniel Knight, "Was Russia Its Own Orient? Reflections on the Contributions of Etkind and Schimmelpenninck to the Debate on Orientalism," *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2002): 299–310.

⁸² This one-sided view was seriously called into question, because it was the discourse and practice of power itself that actually authorized ethnographers to develop their scientific strategies and to apply them. But this is not of primary importance for our argument above; for the European context, see Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (London: Ithaca Press, 1973); a brief summary in Talal Asad, "Afterword: From the History on Colonial Anthropology to the Anthropology of Western Hegemony," in *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 314–324.

were in the best sense indeed part of a laboratory, but in another sense than the contemporaries had imagined. This metaphor pointed first to the immense contraction the museum engendered by representing the empire within the smallest possible space. Mogilianskii (and probably also Smirnov) might have had in mind a sort of microcosm particularly characteristic of the collections of the early modern age;⁸³ but a laboratory is primarily a place where experiments are carried out while their outcomes are uncertain. He and his colleague Klements could not imagine that the objects would resist any ideological assumption or, for that matter, that their museum would be transformed into an imperial test tube. The exhibition area of the Ethnographic Museum could not be a space where the Russian Empire was presented, but rather a site where on different levels the objects produced specific orders depending both on their materiality and on the discourses framing them in national, international, scientific, political, pedagogical, classificatory, and exhibitionary ways.

Strictly speaking, the objects' communicability was connected to their materiality, which required and generated different classification systems—whether ideological or object-bound—and thus subjected them to different mechanisms of ascription and interpretation. When considering the whole museum ensemble, comprising human as well as nonhuman, interior as well as exterior, obvious as well as hidden protagonists and spaces, one can see that a museum represents an intersection of qualitatively different stimuli that could not be so easily harmonized with, aligned with, or even reduced to one single abstract idea. In our case the presumed equivalence of ethnographic and imperial knowledge was at least partly proven wrong, not because the museum's exhibition room had totally refused to adopt or to realize imperial conceptions and colonial conceptions, respectively, but mainly because the contemporary museum experts had been taken in by the categorical fallacy of equating presentation with representation. Ultimately it was the necessary integration of the objects' physical existence into all levels of the museum complex that made it so tempting to use the category of authenticity, which in turn endowed the objects' mere presence with an ostensibly clear and virtually

⁸³ Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise: XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Edition Gallimard, 1987); Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Andreas Grote, ed., *Macrocosmos in Microcosmo. Die Welt in der Stube. Zur Geschichte des Sammelns 1450 bis 1800* [Macrocosmos in microcosmo. The world in the parlor. On the history of collecting, 1450–1800] (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 1994).

metaphysical meaning. But the museum is no place of unambiguity. On the contrary, it is an explicitly artificial place that discloses the indetermination of artifacts. Thus the idea of a smooth translation of ethnographic knowledge into imperial knowledge was grounded on a serious epistemological misconception. The Ethnographic Museum was no mirror of the imperial self; more likely it was in itself the representation of the Other.

Learning about the Nation: Ethnographic Representations of Children, Representations of Ethnography for Children¹

Catriona Kelly

Russian anthropology (or, as it was known until recently, *etnografiia*) has historically fixed its gaze on Russian culture itself. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (and into the twenty-first), the discipline was a forum for the discussion and representation of ideas about national identity. It focused above all on the life of the so-called *narod*, or *Volk*, who were understood in much the same terms as the exotic Others dwelling in faraway places portrayed in classical British anthropology. This tie between anthropology and “internal colonization”² in turn had a significant impact on the representation of children, who, throughout the history of Russian anthropology, were both highly visible and not visible at all. In

¹ The research for this chapter was carried out with support from the Leverhulme Trust (“Childhood in Russia, 1890–1991: A Social and Cultural History,” 2003–2006, www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/russian/childhood) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (“Russian National Identity since 1961: Traditions and Deterritorialisation,” 2007–2011, www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/russian/nationalism). I would like to thank my collaborators on these projects, particularly Dmitry Baranov, Vitaly Bezrogov, and Al’bert Baiburin, for helpful discussions and advice, and the staff of the libraries and archives mentioned, as well as Alla Sal’nikova and the audience of a round table on children in academic, pedagogical, and literary texts, Kazan, November 11–12, 2010. Some of the material in this chapter (on the State Museum of Ethnography) is an adapted version of a Russian text first published in the volume of papers from that conference (*Detstvo v nauchnykh, obrazovatel’nykh i khudozhesetvennykh tekstakh* [Childhood in scholarly, pedagogical, and artistic texts], ed. Alla Sal’nikova (Kazan: Izd. Kazanskogo federal’nogo universiteta, 2011).

² On “internal colonization” in the Russian context, see, e.g., Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia’s Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011); Alexander Etkind and Il’ja Kalinin, eds., *Tam vnutri: praktiki vnutrennei kolonizatsii v kul’turnoi istorii Rossii* [There within. Practices of internal colonization in the cultural history of Russia] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012).

some respects children could be considered *the* subject matter of the discipline, the quintessential representatives of the *narod* (Russian people) in its supposed immediacy and sincerity. Yet the very identification between children and the *narod* meant that, both before 1917 and in the Soviet period, analysis of children's experience and mental world as phenomena in their own right was very limited. Whether as the objects of ethnographic research, as the audience for ethnography, or as practitioners of ethnography, children were often not differentiated from the rest of the *narod*, and consideration of the specific experience of childhood was vestigial (indeed, commentators rarely even inquired whether experience specific to children existed in the first place).³

At the same time, both the practice of ethnography as a scholarly discipline and the popularization of its findings could scarcely avoid the influence of wider social trends. There was pressure to reflect the ideologies of Russian (and later Soviet) nationalism and to communicate discoveries to a mass audience (a pressure that became acute in the Soviet period). There was a rising sense that children were a uniquely important sector of society, whose situation should be analyzed in detail, and that they represented an audience with a particular character, to be addressed using specialized techniques.⁴ There was also a growing determination to use eth-

³ One case in point is children's language. Typically, commentators simply assigned rustic or dialect features to children, rather than suggesting that there was a child-specific way of speaking. Take, for example, the rendering of dialogue in A.M. Pomeryantseva, "Derevenskie kartinki" [Village pictures] (offprint of an article from *Trudovaya pomoshch'* journal [December 1903]: 1–2). (Library of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg (henceforth MAE), shelfmark IE B261).

⁴ If anything, interest in childhood was more intense in Russian ethnography of the early twentieth century than in Western ethnography of the period. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Carolyn Sargent, editors of *Small Wars: The Cultural Politics of Childhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), assert: "Most ethnographic writing represents childhood as a transitional life stage devoid of any intrinsic meaning or value [...] By and large, children appear in ethnographic texts the way cattle make their appearance in Evans-Pritchard's classic, *The Nuer*—as forming the essential backdrop to everyday life, but mute and unable to teach us anything about society and culture" (13–14). Scheper-Hughes and Sargent go on to compare the "hermeneutics of suspicion" towards children in anthropological discourse with the governing attitudes towards women up to the mid-1970s: "This hermeneutics of suspicion is accompanied by a failure to view children as *sui generis* and apart from the child's relationship to adult society and norms. What independent moral systems guide children's lives? How do children think about power, fairness, and justice? About work and play? Sex and love? [...] How do older children create, establish, and maintain bodily autonomy and how do they project extensions of the body both in the

nography and folklore in the process of socializing children. This last trend proved to be one of the most lasting and characteristic features of the Russian anthropological tradition. But interest in children as the subjects of ethnographic writing emerged at an earlier stage, so it makes sense to begin there.

Objects and Agents: Children in Russian Anthropology

Folkloric texts that circulated among children—for example, the texts of counting games, *schitalki*—were collected from early on in the history of Russian anthropology. Toys, clothes, and other items belonging to children became part of the holdings of ethnographic museums. But early collectors did not make special efforts to collect material associated with children; it simply ended up in their collections. Consideration of children as a special group began only in the late nineteenth century.⁵ A pioneer was Egor Arsen'evich Pokrovskii, whose study *The Care of Young Children* was published in 1888.⁶ Pokrovskii (1834–1895) was a medical

home and on the street? How do children create safe spaces, establish fictive families, mark territories, colonize, and domesticate their spaces? How do they interact with adults who are neither their parents nor teachers, including police, shopkeepers, neighbors, lovers, casual employers?” Some of these issues, such as children’s relationship to space, their interaction with adults other than their parents, and their creation of “fictive families,” were extensively explored in 1920s Russian ethnography (see below).

⁵ It was not consistent even then. For example, while the extraordinarily detailed ethnographic project launched by Prince Viacheslav Nikolaevich Tenishev (1844–1903) in the 1890s accumulated incidental material about children, there were large gaps in the record relating to their lives: one cannot find systematic information about child socialization or the material culture of childhood. (The Tenishev records are in the process of being published in their entirety by the Russian Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg, in whose archive they are held. See *Russkie krest'iane: Zhizn'. Byt. Nrvy. Materialy Tenishevskogo arkhiva kniazia V. N. Tenisheva* [The Russian peasants: Life, custom, morals. Materials of the Tenishev Archive of Count V.N. Tenishev] (St. Petersburg: Delovaia poligrafiia, 2004), etc. On the assumptions behind the program, see Dmitry Baranov, “V.N. Tenishev’s ‘Peasant’ Programme: Ideology and Practice,” *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* 3 (2006): 193–205 (http://anthropologie.kunstkamera.ru/files/pdf/eng003/eng3_baranov.pdf). Baranov points out that “many questions in Tenishev’s Programme literally ‘script’ the answers received, directing them along particular channels that were determined in advance.” As material was received by the Tenishev team, so the questions were edited to concentrate on what was seen as most valuable.

⁶ E.A. Pokrovskii, *Fizicheskoe vospitanie detei u raznykh narodov, preimushchestvenno Rossii* [The physical education of children among various peoples, especially from

doctor who approached the anthropology of childhood from the point of view of a natural scientist attempting to understand different practices in the socialization of children, looking for those that might be classified as most effective. *The Care of Young Children*, while encyclopedic in its detail, adopted a quasi-normative standpoint. Among the practices recorded were ones that the reader was obviously supposed to regard as unhygienic and callous, such as the use of the *soska*, a pacifier of cloth or chewed bread that was the bugbear of contemporary physicians.⁷

In this perception of “folk life,” children were understood primarily as the objects of social behavior, as material to be shaped by adults. A very different type of interpretive tradition, the investigation of folk beliefs and rituals, also understood children as the raw material for action by adults. Work on what Arnold van Gennep was definitively to name in 1909 “rites of passage” emphasized rituals as social events intended to transform children from one life stage into another, in which they were molded by the social practices to which they were exposed.⁸ For specialists in physi-

Russia] (Moscow: Tipografiia A.A. Kartseva, 1884), published as vol. 45 of *Izvestiia Imperatorskogo Obshchestva Liubitelei Estestvoznaniia, antropologii i geografii* [News of the Imperial Society of Enthusiasts of Sciences, Anthropology, and Geography].

⁷ Pokrovskii, *Fizicheskoe vospitanie*, 268–271, refers to the *soska* and also other signs of “wrong” treatment by Russian peasants, such as their indifference to the condition of infants. This attitude was typical among the physicians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: see, e.g., K.G. Khrushchov, “Akusherskaia pomoshch’ v Voronezhskoi gubernii i zhelatel’nye v nei uluchsheniia” [Midwifery in Voronezh guberniia and the improvements desirable in its practices], *Trudy VII Soveshchaniia gg. zemskikh vrachei i predsedelei zemskikh uprav Voronezhskoi gubernii, 25–31 avgusta 1900* 2 (Voronezh: Tipo-Litografiia V. V. Iurkevicha, 1900): 173–187.

⁸ A. Van Gennep, *Les Rites de passage* (Paris: publisher not given, 1909). Compare the work, for example, of D.K. Zelenin (see, e.g., “Obriadovoe prazdnestvo sovershennoletii devitsy u russkikh” [Ritual celebration of the coming of age among Russian girls], in *Izbrannye trudy: Stat’i po dukhovnoi kul’ture, 1901–1913* [Selected works. Articles on spiritual culture, 1901–1913], Moscow: Indrik, 1994). The neo-Zeleninist work of the late Soviet period also focused on the transformation of the child-object through ritual: “The newborn is not considered a real person (or even a child) until a series of ritual actions have been performed on him, whose main purpose, it would seem, is to ‘turn him into’ a human being [...] The naming of the child is the most important mechanism for implanting the newborn into culture. If up to this point the personality of the future human being has been formed by ritual means [...] then this human being, having acquired a name, takes on new qualities: it becomes the object of the semiosphere, an entity that can be named, recognized, perceived.” (A. Baiburin, *Ritual v traditsionnoi kul’ture: strukturno-semanticheskii analiz vostochnoslavianskikh obriadov* [The ritual in traditional culture. A structural-semantic analysis of East Slavic customs] (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1993), 41–46 (emphasis added). Cf. Dmitry Baranov, “Obraz

cal anthropology, on the other hand, children (like adults) were primarily of significance when they could be used as experimental material by the anthropologists themselves—in anthropometrical studies, for example.⁹

However, by the late nineteenth century, some Russian anthropologists and folklorists were also beginning to explore children as social and cultural actors. For example, children's games became a special field of study. Here, once again, a pioneer was Egor Pokrovskii, whose *Children's Games, Primarily Russian, Connected with History, Ethnography, Pedagogy, and Hygiene* was first published in 1887.¹⁰ Pavel Ivanovich Shein's collection of "Great Russian" folk songs, which came out in 1898, included a special section of "children's" texts, which included not only songs and rhymes sung to children by their mothers and nurses, but texts exchanged by children among themselves, such as *draznilki* (taunts):

Олеша два гроша	Olesha dva grosha	Olyosha the dosser
Жена не хороша:	Zhena ne khorosha	Your wife is a slosher,
Груди большие,	Grudi bol'shie,	Her tits are like buns,
Полупудовые.	Polupudovye.	They weigh half a ton. ¹¹

rebenka v narodnoi embriologii" [The image of the child in popular embryology], *Materialy po etnografii* [Ethnographical materials] 1 (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskii etnograficheskii muzei, 2002): 35–37. Obviously, in the case of infants, this interpretation is logical, but by and large older children were accorded a rather similar role; a discussion that places more emphasis on the agency of the child actor in ritual is T.A. Bernshtam, "Sovershennoletie devushki v metaforakh igrovogo fol'klora (traditsionnyi aspekt russkoi kul'tury)" [Adult girls in the metaphors of the folklore of children's plays], in *Etnicheskie stereotipy muzhskogo i zhenskogo povedeniya* [Ethnic stereotypes of masculine and feminine behavior], eds. Al'bert K. Baiburin and I.S. Kon (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1991), 234–257. Once again, Western work on the anthropology of childhood is similar: see, e.g., J.L. Briggs, *Inuit Morality Play: The Emotional Education of a Three-Year-Old* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), which deals marginally with children's self-consciousness and capacity to "act up" to adults (see 60 and 179) but mostly with how they react to what is said to and about them.

⁹ On the history of Russian physical anthropology, see Ia. Ia. Roginskii and M.G. Levin, *Antropologiya* [Anthropology] (Moscow: Vysshiaia shkola, 1963), and more recently, the work of Marina Mogilner, for example *Homo Imperii: Istoriia fizicheskoi antropologii v Rossii* [Homo imperii. The history of physical anthropology in Russia], (Moscow: NLO, 2008).

¹⁰ E.A. Pokrovskii, *Detskie igry, preimushchestvenno russkie v sviazi s istoriei, etnografiei, pedagogikoi i gigienoi* [Children's games, primarily Russian, in their connection with history, ethnography, pedagogy, and social hygiene] (2 vols.; Moscow: Tip. A.A. Kartseva, 1887, 1895).

¹¹ Text from Vladimirskaiia province, collected by I. Golyшева, and originally published in *Vladimirskie gubernskie vedomosti* [Transactions from the Vladimir guberniia] 30 (1896), P.I. Shein, comp., *Velikoruss v svoikh pesniakh, obriadakh, obychaiakh, vero-*

The internationally popular “nonsense rhymes” also figured:

Акулина с висока	Akulina s vysoka	Akulina from on high
Зашушила гусака.	Zashushila gusaka	Killed a gander, made him cry.
Гусак пищит,	Gusak pishchit,	The gander he let out loud squeals,
Сто рублей ташит.	Sto rublei tashchit.	A hundred rubles he did steal. ¹²

Work on children’s texts continued into the first decades of the twentieth century (for instance, Father Aleksei Sobolev’s major collection, *Children’s Games and Songs*, came out in 1915).¹³ It accelerated in the 1920s, accompanied by a shift in perception. In the introduction to his 1898 collection, Shein expressed doubts about the appropriate classification of materials produced by children. Not everything that circulated among them was actually child-produced. Justifying his own categorization of songs and rhymes about animals, insects, and wild beasts as “satirical” and *skomorosh’ie* [clowns’ texts], Shein argued that such texts had simply become popular as a way of entertaining children but had not originally been associated with them. They had once been meant for adults:

If the little ones enjoy using these songs and rhymes [*pribautki*] when they get past the toddler stage, that circumstance does not at all give us the right to pass them off as the type of monument of folk creation on the basis of which we might study the language, material life, and spiritual life of peasant children. What would we say of a linguist in today’s world who, wanting to study the steady course of development of the sounds in human language, happened to take as his material not the sounds that are found in various individuals of infant years, but in such supposedly primitive children’s words as *zhizha* [fire], *papa* [bread], *niam-niam* [eat (= yum-yum)], *babi-bai* or *bain’ki* [to sleep (= hushaby)], *mu-mu* [a cow (= moocow)], *tpua* [to go for a ride, a spin (giddyup)], and so on? One can best answer this by citing the German proverb, *Wie die Alten sunen, so zwitscherten die Jungen* [as adults sang, so children babbled].¹⁴

vaniakh, skazkakh, legendakh i t. p. Materialy, sobrannye i privedennye v poriadok P. I. Sheinom [The Great Russians in their songs, customs, habits, beliefs, tales, legends. Materials collected and arranged by P.I. Shein], no. 184 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1898), 33. (The text has been freely translated to reflect the importance of rhyme, and particularly rhymes on the name of the individual addressed, in directing the insult.) The section of texts associated with childhood, titled “Detskie,” appears at the beginning of Shein’s book, 3–52.

¹² Text recorded by P.I. Shein himself in Shein Tula, comp., *Velikoruss v svoikh pesniakh*, no. 151 (year not given), 29.

¹³ A.N. Sobolev, *Detskie igry i pesni* [Plays and songs of children] (Vladimir: Tipografiia Gubernskogo Pravleniia, 1915).

¹⁴ Shein, *Velikoruss v svoikh pesniakh*, viii.

James Sully, on the other hand (in his *Studies of Childhood*, 1895, first translated into Russian in 1909), focused precisely on “baby talk,” contending that childhood preserved a worldview that went back to primal human cultures. This belief was to be influential in Russia as well as internationally.¹⁵ In the early twentieth century, children’s experiments with language also attracted interest in their own right. Among the most impressive examples was Georgii Vinogradov, a linguist working in Siberia in the 1920s. While Vinogradov produced a study on how adults treated children (“folk upbringing,” *narodnoe vospitanie*), he was primarily interested in children’s autonomous activities, writing a fascinating study of the secret languages widely used by children around the age of twelve, as well as of children’s folklore.¹⁶ Alongside this work by a professional linguist, considerable research was done by educated mothers and fathers, who looked at their own small children with the eyes of amateur ethnographers, contributing to the widespread genre of “mother’s (or father’s) diary.”¹⁷

The socio-anthropological study of rural children also boomed in the early twentieth century. A landmark was *The Life of Ivan*, a study of

¹⁵ On Sully, see C. Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890–1991* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), chap. 1. Later, this view was also to shape the work of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotskii.

¹⁶ G.N. Vinogradov, *Detskii narodnyi kalendar’* [The children’s folk calendar] (Irkutsk: Izdanie Vostochno-Sibirskogo Otdela Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva, 1924); *Detskaia satiricheskaia lirika* [Children’s satirical lyrics] (Irkutsk: Izdanie Vostochno-Sibirskogo otdeleniia Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva, 1925), *Detskie tainnye iazyki* [Secret languages of children] (Irkutsk: Vlast’ truda, 1926). See also N.A. Rybnikov, *Slovar’ russkogo rebenka. Materialy po razvitiu detskogo iazyka* [Dictionary of the Russian child. Materials on the development of children’s language] (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

¹⁷ See, e.g., N.I. Gavrilova and M.P. Stakhorskaia, *Dnevnik materi* [Diary of a mother] (Moscow: Prakticheskie znaniia, 1916); A. Levonevskii, *Moi rebenok: Nabliudenii nad psikhicheskim razvitiem mal’chika v techenie pervykh let ego zhizni* [My child. Observations of the psychological development of a boy in the first years of his life] (St. Petersburg: Izd. O. Bogdanovoi, 1914); V.A. Rybnikova-Shilova, *Moi dnevnik: Zapiski o razvitiu rebenka ot rozhdeniia do 3-kh let* [Notes on the development of a small child from birth to three years] (Orel: Orlovskoe otdelenie Gosizdata, 1923). The most influential study in this vein was Kornei Chukovskii’s *Malen’kie deti* [Little children] (1928), which, under the new title of *Ot dvukh do piati* [From two to five], was in its fourth edition by 1934. It was then shelved for two decades, but in 1955 it appeared again (in adapted form) and was regularly reprinted throughout the remaining decades of Soviet rule. See C. Kelly, *Children’s World*, chaps. 2, 3. For an excellent historical discussion of the genre, see Andy Byford, “Russian Parents’ Diaries and the Child Study Movement,” *Russian Review* 72 (2013), pp. 212–41.

day-to-day peasant existence by the self-taught ethnographer Ol'ga Semenova-Tian-Shanskaia (1863–1906), daughter of the famous explorer Petr Semenov-Tian-Shanskii. It described the life of a small boy from Central Russia and his place in village life generally. Based on four years of direct observation (1898–1902) in Ryazan' Province, Semenova's book was published posthumously in 1914.¹⁸ At the time, the impact of the study was muted, but during the 1920s, numerous studies of children's role in the rural economy were published. These included not just surveys of the work tasks customarily assigned to children but also more offbeat portraits. An ethnographic expedition that visited Valdai Province in 1923 called at a former manor house (*barskii dom*) where the entire family was being supported by a seventeen-year-old boy who had been ploughing the fields and running the farm for four years. In another, similar household of the formerly well-to-do, a twelve-year-old boy and fifteen-year-old girl were doing all the farmwork, while their mother, who could not get used to having come down in the world, promenaded around in a diamond necklace and mended shoes, talking of past luxuries.¹⁹

“The School Participates in the Creation of a Healthy Village”: Ethnography in the School System, 1900–1932

The background to this new representation of “children close-up” was complex. In the early twentieth century, ethnographers generally became much more interested in the biographies of informants, partly because

¹⁸ O. Semenova-Tian-Shanskaia, *Zhizn' Ivana: Ocherki iz byta krest'ian odnoi iz chernozemnykh gubernii* [The life of Ivan. Sketches from the life of a peasant from the black earth gubernii] (St. Petersburg: RGO, 1914); published as *Zapiski Imperatorskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva po otdeleniiu etnografii* [Account of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, ethnographic division], vol. 39. See also the excellent edition in English edited by David Ransel: *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*, trans. M. Levine (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), the introduction to which contains biographical information about Tian-Shanskaia and a history of the publication of her study.

¹⁹ Vladimir G. Tan-Bogoraz, ed., *Staryi i novyi byt* [Old and new custom] (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924), 97, 138. Such families were of course primary targets of “dekulakization” campaigns, though some poorer landowners in remote places stayed on in their original houses until World War II or even later. See, e.g., an interview in the Oxford Archive of Russian Life History, Oxf/Lev V–04 PF2B, p. 18, for an account of a family in Novgorod province.

fewer were now using intermediaries.²⁰ There was some reflection of this emphasis on direct contact with sources in the school system as well. By this time, some teachers were encouraging children to write essays about festivals in the village. Trofim Mekhil'chenkov, a primary school pupil in 1907, contributed the following account of a village holiday:

Everyone who comes to the end of the last day—the last working day, the eve of a holiday—is sort of delighted that at last the day of rest, of complete freedom from work, has come. No sooner does the holiday come than everyone, except for cooks and children, goes to the church to attend the mass. Along with everyone, I go as well.²¹

A few teachers even got their students to collect folkloric texts. In the archive of the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg is a collection of materials collected by schoolchildren in Mogilevskaia Province in 1914–1915. The material includes spells, folk beliefs, tales, and riddles:

Лятела павя села на лаву (Лето) Liatela pava sela na lavu (Leto) [A peacock that flew and settled on the bench—Summer]

Круглинькая, малинькая весь дом освещает (Лампа) Kruglin'kaya, malin'kaya ves' dom osveshchaet (Lampa) [Little and round, but it lights the whole house—A lamp].

Маленький, горбатенький весь дом стираже <так!> (Замок) Malen'kii, gorbaten'kii ves' dom stirazhe [sic.] (Zamok) [Little and hunchbacked, it keeps the whole house safe—A lock].

Маленький, зялененький сидит никуда не бязжит (цвeток) Malen'kii, zialenen'kii siadit nikuda ne biazhit [Little and green, it sits and doesn't run—A plant].²²

²⁰ Shein, like Aleksandr Afanasiev, the folk-tale publisher and “Russian Grimm,” had acknowledged intermediaries rather than informants. D.K. Zelenin, on the other hand, named and described his informants: see, e.g., *Velikorusskie skazki Viatskoi gubernii* [Great Russian tales from Viatsk guberniia] (Petrograd: no publisher given, 1915).

²¹ “Shkol'nye sochineniia T. Mel'nikova” [The school essays of T. Mel'nikov], RGIA [Russian State Historical Archive, St. Petersburg], f. 803, op. 16, d. 2339, l. 30.

²² “Zagadki, Pesni i Skazka. Iz derevni Rytskova Mogilevskoi gubernii Rogachevskogo uezda Gorodetskoi volosti. L. Ermolaev. III klassa” [Riddles, songs, and tales. From Rytskov village in Mogilev guberniia, Rogachev county, Gorodedetskii district. L. Ermolaev, third grade], AREM [Archive of the Russian Ethnographic Museum], f. 1, op. 2, d. 843, ll. 40 ob.–41. The riddles are in what is now termed *trasiianka*, a dialect combining Belarus and Russian grammar, phonetics, and idioms.

Even allowing for the fact that he may have started school late, or repeated one or more grades, the collector of these riddles was probably not older than 14 or 15, and the simplicity of the texts suggests that he may have collected them from other children.

In the process of observing and collecting, children were learning new techniques and perceptions—above all, to see from the outside the culture in which they had grown up. While classical ethnography represented children as the instruments of the adults' organizing ritual, the representations in the texts written in the schoolroom were different. Rather, children constantly questioned the situations in which they found themselves. Sometimes they wrote from the "enlightened" viewpoint expected by school education: "Thanks to the weak education of the inhabitants of Belorussia, many pagan customs survive."²³ At other times, they represented themselves as alienated—for example, in the case of the autobiography of a young man who recalled his own inept behavior at a family wedding:

The door opened, and the guests came in. The best man was walking in front holding a horse-whip. He came straight up to me and shouted at me to get up. To be honest, I had the fright of my life and was about to move, but people all around started making signs that I should stay put. So I did, and when the best man saw that I wasn't going to be intimidated, he flung down twenty kopeks, and I took them and made myself scarce.²⁴

But it was not only the new emphasis on the voice of the child in education that made a difference. The new field of child psychology was also evolving fast—with exploration of children's dreams as well as the abundant use of structured interviews.²⁵ These developments were consoli-

²³ "Kaputskii, uchenik IV klassa" [Kaputski, pupil of the fourth grade] (no further details), AREM, f. 1, op. 2, d. 843, l. 6.

²⁴ Dimitrii Kuznetsov, "Avtobiografiya" [Autobiography], RGIA, f. 803, op. 16, d. 2372, ll. 22 ob.–23 ob.

²⁵ Among the most influential specialists using structured interviews was G.I. Rossolimo. See, e.g., *Plan issledovaniia detskoi dushi (v zdorovom i boleznennom sostoyanii* [Proposal for the exploration of the child's soul (in the healthy and the morbid state)] (2nd ed., Moscow: Tipo-litografiia Tovarishchestva I. N. Kushenerov i Ko, 1909). Such methods were also used for the determination of "mental defectiveness": see, e.g., V.P. Kashchenko, ed., *Defektivnye deti i shkola* [Defective children and the school] (Moscow: Kuznetskii most, 1912); A.M. Shubert, *Kratkoe opisanie i kharakteristika metodov opredeleniia umstvennoi otstalosti detei* [Short description and characteristics of the methods for the determination of mental backwardness in children] (Moscow: K.I. Tikhomirov, 1913). On dreams, see, e.g., "Sluchai sonambulizma u devochki 6 let (iz ambulatorii Detskoi bol'nitsy sv. Ol'gi)" [The case of a six-year-old somnambulistic girl

dated, after October 1917, by the emphasis in early Soviet political discourse on children's personal autonomy. Some discussion of children's rights—in the sense of entitlement to self-expression, rather than the need to be protected—took place.²⁶ Soviet institutions were expected to create structures of democratic representation for children. In Soviet schools, for example, governance by teachers alone was replaced by forums in which pupil representatives could contribute to discussion. There was a feeling that children were, at least potentially, the most politically reliable members of the broad masses. The idea was that they would take the communist values they learned in school and carry them to backward members of their own families and of society at large.²⁷

Naturally, there was also interest in how successfully the new values were actually being transmitted to the child population. Some researchers, particularly adherents of “pedology” (educational psychology), worked with questionnaires, attempting to establish which figures might be included in the personal pantheon of the average Soviet child, what they were reading, how they spent their days, and how they regarded the new regime.²⁸ Another means of investigation was the free essay, a set-piece of the 1920s schools syllabus. In the nurseries and schools run by the First Experimental Station of Narkompros, children were asked to ruminate on traditional peasant life and to record local lore. In response to a classroom assignment, one boy from Class Four of the Piatkinskaia School wrote:

(from the Children's Hospital of St. Olga)], *Detskaia meditsina* [Children's medicine] 4 (1901): 306–307. There is also some discussion of this in Catriona Kelly, “A Wolf in the Nursery: Freud, Ethnography, and the History of Russian Childhood,” <http://childcult.ruh.ru/article.html?id=67313>.

²⁶ See C. Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890–1991*, chap. 2.

²⁷ This idea was evoked with entertaining directness in a manual for parents by E.G. Bibanova, *Kak gotovit' iz rebenka v vozraste do 3-kh let budushchego stroitelia novoi zhizni* [How to make a child of under three into a future builder of the new life] (Moscow and Leningrad: Moskovskii rabochii, 1927).

²⁸ See, e.g., P.P. Blonskii, *Pedologiia* (Moscow: Rabotnik prosveshcheniia, 1925), which draws on, among other things, anthropometric studies; P.A. Rubtsova, *Chto chitaiut deti* [What children read] (Moscow: Perednik, 1928). Publications of this kind were ubiquitous in pedagogical/pedological journals: see, e.g., L. Odintsova, “Kak otdykhaet nash fabzavuchnik?” [How does our factory worker recuperate?], *Prosveshchenie na transporte* [Education in transport schools] no. 1 (January 1928): 73–75. For records of work by teachers, see V. Bezrogov and K. Kelli [= C. Kelly], eds., *Gorodok v tabakerke: Detstvo v Rossii ot Nikolaia Pervogo do Borisa El'tsina. Vzroslye o detiakh i deti o sebe* [Little town in a snuffbox. Childhood in Russia from Nicholas I to Boris Yeltsin. Adults on children and children on themselves] (Moscow and Tver': Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2008), vol. 1, chap. 4.

THE SCARIEST THING I EVER HEARD

Once at New Year we all went to this widow woman to tell our fortunes. Only they all started trying to tell their fortunes, and then suddenly this lass dropped a card and started telling us to look for it under the table. And there was this lad sitting there—half a man, but half a devil: he had dog's legs and a dog's tail. That lass, she wouldn't go for the card, and then this other lass did, and she sees these dog's legs and a dog's tail, but half the body was a man's. And she surely rushed off home then. It was the devil. Then the next day they all came to that house with an icon, everyone started praying to God, and there wasn't anything there. It was the devil, he turned himself into half-devil and half-person.²⁹

The practice of commissioning texts from children about such topics shifted toward seeing children as ethnographic informants.³⁰ As in the 1910s, children were encouraged to record their own lives directly (for instance, keeping a diary as a homework assignment).³¹ Close observation of children's activities—such as games and storytelling—was also widespread.³² However, the primary purpose of such “pedagogical anthropology” was less to record children's attitudes than to remold them.³³ This was particularly obvious in work with *besprizornye* (street children), who, it was firmly believed, should be “rescued” and restored to participation in

²⁹ “Sochineniia uchenikov kaluzhskikh shkol Pervoi opytnoi stantsii Narkomprosa” [School essays of the pupils studying in the Kaluga Schools of the first experimental station of the People's Commissariat for Education], NA RAO [Scholarly Archive of the Russian Academy of Education, Moscow], f. 1, op. 1, d. 241, l. 4.

³⁰ Cf. I.M. Solov'ev, *Literaturnoe tvorchestvo i iazyk detei shkol'nogo vozrasta* [Literary creativity and the language of schoolchildren] (Moscow and Leningrad: Moskovskoe Aktsionernoe Izdatel'skoe Obshchestvo, 1927), an anthology of texts by children.

³¹ For observation of games, see, e.g., E.S. Mikhlina and N.I. Nikitenko, “Igrovaia deiatel'nost' krest'ianskogo rebenka” [The play activity of the peasant child], in *Krest'ianskii rebenok: materialy k ego izucheniiu* [The peasant child. Materials for his study], ed. E.O. Zeiliger (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat [“Biblioteka pedagoga”], 1928), 55–59. On diaries, see the example by Ania Rybnikova in Bezrogov and Kelly, eds., *Gorodok v tabakerke*, vol. 1, pp. 272–275. This chapter also contains numerous examples of pedagogical anthropology from the 1920s, such as record cards on the physical condition and mental world of schoolchildren.

³² For example, the archival materials of the First Experimental Station of Narkompros contain such recordings, as well as student teachers' memoirs of the games they themselves played as children. See, e.g., NA RAO f. 1 op. 1 d. 49.

³³ Of course, ethnographic representations themselves retained a strong reforming drive: see, e.g., *Vystavka “Zhizn' rebenka pri svete etnografii”* [Exposition “Life of the Child in the Light of Ethnography”] (Leningrad: Izdanie Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1929), which observed, for instance, that *malokul'turnye narody* (“peoples of a low level of civilization”) still indulged in magic rites, such as unknotting belts and unplaiting hair, when a woman was about to give birth (p. 1).

the rational collective.³⁴ But it was also true of “family children.” A child with appropriate attitudes was supposed to look forward to the transformation of rural life. “I like the fact that we’ve all got our own towels and our own beds, that we’ve got lots of portraits and paintings and posters on the walls, that we have a portrait of V.I. Lenin, that we have V.I. Lenin hanging in our *izba* (cottage),” wrote one rural child in a school essay in the mid-1920s. “But I don’t like the fact that we have a calf at the far end of the *izba* and that there’s no fresh air.”³⁵

In the official school programs, representation of traditional village life was explicitly ideological. In 1927, for example, among the themes suggested for discussion was “The Old Village” (*Staraia derevnia*). Teachers were supposed to cover traditional healing [*znakharstvo*], traditional midwives [*babki*], the “harmful influence of the church,” “wrong ways of looking after children,” and so on. In contrast, “The New Village” (*Novaya derevnia*) looked at “correct ways of healing with the aid of the medical orderly and the doctor,” trained midwives, the protection of mothers and infants, crèches, and children’s playgroups. “The school participates in the creation of a healthy village” was the watchword. In readers, children were presented with material about actual or supposed peasant life. For instance, the primary school reader *New Way* (*Novyi put’*) was structured around the figure of the village boy, Vania. His family was introduced at the beginning, and then there were scenes where the *izba*

³⁴ This attitude toward street children, who started receiving attention from philanthropists and lawyers in the late nineteenth century, was persistent—understandably enough, since such children were often poorly nourished, psychologically unstable, and prone to conflict with the forces of law and order. An important pioneering publication was M.N. Gernet, ed., *Deti-prestupniki* [Criminal children] (Moscow: Knigoizdatel’svo V.I. Znamenskoi, 1912). Vast quantities of studies of *besprizornost’* were published in the 1920s: see, e.g., *Bor’ba s besprizornost’iu: Materialy Pervoi moskovskoi konferentsii po bor’be s besprizornost’iu 16–17 marta 1924 g.* [The fight against homelessness. Materials of the First Moscow Conference on the Fight against Homelessness, March 16–17, 1924] (Moscow: Rabotnik prosveshcheniia, 1924). While the concern with homeless children persisted into the Stalin era, a historical discontinuity was whether they should be persuaded, coerced, or forced into residence in institutions. Some model institutions in the 1920s operated an “open door” policy. However, from 1935, with new legislation lowering the age of criminal responsibility to twelve for certain offenses, forced institutionalization became the rule, reinforced by further legislation to “eliminate” child homelessness in 1936 (for further details, see C. Kelly, *Children’s World*, chaps. 5, 6, 7).

³⁵ V. Kozlov and E. Semenova, “Obydennyi NEP: sochineniia i pis’ma shkol’nikov 20-kh godov” [Everyday NEP (New Economic Policy). Articles and letters of pupils of the 1920s], *Neizvestnaya Rossiya: XX vek* 3 (1993): 279.

was prepared for winter, or Vania learned to tell the time, and so on.³⁶ On the other hand, traditional folklore—stories, songs, and games—had a marginal place in the program, though works in the “folk style,” such as Pushkin’s verse tales, and songs by Glinka, Mussorgskii, Rimskii-Korsakov, Glière, and others, were among the recommended material.³⁷

In the early Soviet period, the emphasis placed on direct learning meant that the excursion was of central importance.³⁸ Naturally, such views were also intimately connected with the dominance of *kraevedenie* (study of a given locality, embracing geography, history, ethnography, literary studies, etc.) in Soviet scholarship and public life at the time.³⁹ Great emphasis was placed upon children’s direct investigation of their environment. A Leningrad teacher recorded in 1924 that the main teaching topic in local schools was the *raion* (city district) and that children might, for example, be taken on excursions to the local market, where they would investigate where the traders and goods came from.⁴⁰ Hands-on ethnographic research of this kind was a central part of the “social studies” (*obshchestvovedenie*) that was the core of the school program. Indeed, the 1927 methodological notes for teachers had to warn them not to let the time spent on excursions get out of hand, important as it was for children to get a sense of local conditions.⁴¹

³⁶ *Novyi put’* [New path] (comp. M. Mel’nikov, ed. A. Kalashnikov) (9th ed., Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1930), e.g., 24–25, 45, 85–86.

³⁷ *Programmy i metodicheskie zapiski edinoi trudovoi shkoly*. Vypusk vtoroi: Gorodskie i sel’skie shkoly 1 stupeni. Metodicheskie zapiski k programmam [Curriculum and methodical notes for the unified school of labor. 2nd part: Urban and rural schools of the first grade. Methodical notes to the curricula] (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1927), 43, 210–237.

³⁸ *Pervyi Vserossiiskii muzeinyi s’ezd. Dekabr’ 1930 g. Tezisy dokladov* [First All-Russian Museum Congress. December 1930. Abstracts of the papers] (Leningrad: Leningradskii oblastnoi otdel Soiuza rabotnikov prosveshcheniia. Muzeinaia Komissiiia, 1930), 76: “Every school should visit its district museum not less than once a year” [...] “the aims of such excursions should be strictly linked to productive ends: the illustration of the material that is covered in the educational process at school through pictures of construction, nature, the cultural growth of a district achieved by the collective efforts of the entire local study *aktiv* of a given district.”

³⁹ For an English-language history of *kraevedenie*, see E. Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself: The Russian Idea of Kraevedenie* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

⁴⁰ N.N., “Iz pis’m petrogradskogo pedagoga” [From the letters of a Petersburg pedagogue], *Russkaia shkola za rubezhom* [Russian school abroad] 2 (1924), 126.

⁴¹ *Programmy i metodologicheskie zapiski*, 7–8.

The Glories of Heritage: From Ethnography to Folklore, 1932–1940

In the 1930s, however, came important changes in the school program. From 1930, the traditional subject divisions that had been elided by the “complex system,” “Dalton Plan,” and project work of the 1920s started to be reintroduced.⁴² In 1932 the need was stressed to acquaint children with the geography and history of “the motherland” (in other words, not of the locality). Political discussion was replaced by affirmation. In the words of “How to Work with Stalin Speeches in the Primary and Secondary School” (1934), “The pupils must be left with a strong and vivid impression of the grandiose feats that have been executed under the leadership of the Communist Party in our time and of the great perspectives that lie ahead of the Land of the Soviets. Against the background of the struggle for socialism must be shown the leading role of the Leninist party and the great leader of the international proletariat, C[omrade] Stalin.”⁴³ Scrutiny of peasant and working-class life (with its potential for seeming “backward” and hence not inspiring patriotism) was abandoned; the ethnographic investigation of the locality disappeared.

The Stalin era was a notoriously restrictive period for academic work of all kinds. The pursuit of fieldwork and the conclusions that could be drawn from the analysis of the *narod* were closely policed. The ethnography of the 1920s had produced a bleak picture of conditions in the Soviet Union, not just in the “backward” countryside but in cities as well. For example, E.O. Kabo’s remarkable study of Moscow working-class families, published in 1928, pointed to crowded conditions, poor hygiene, and material deprivation. While some families, touchingly, made special arrangements for the youngest members, and might even have special rooms or “corners” for the children, in others, squalor and violence was rife.⁴⁴

Once Stalin had made his famous declaration at the First Congress of Stakhanovites on November 17, 1935, “Life has become better, comrades. Life has become happier,” such candid representations were replaced by formulaic propaganda images of ideal Soviet families. Ethnographic

⁴² *Programmy fabrichno-zavodskoi semiletki* [Curriculum of the seven-year plan of the plants and factories], nos. 1–9 (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

⁴³ “Kak rabotat’ nad dokladom t. Stalina v nachal’noi i srednei shkole” [How to work on a speech by Comrade Stalin in the elementary and intermediate school], *Za politicheskoiu shkolu* [Toward the poly-technical school], 2 (1934), 5.

⁴⁴ E.O. Kabo, *Ocherki rabocheho byta: opyt monograficheskogo issledovaniia* [Sketches of the working people’s life: An attempt at a monographic study] (Moscow: Izd. V. Ts. S. P. S., 1928).

investigations of children's lives were particularly sensitive because children's happiness was now a crucial element in the legitimation of Stalin's leadership (as in the slogan, "Thank You Dear Comrade Stalin for Our Happy Childhood").⁴⁵ Typical was a supposedly documentary account of the life of Praskov'ia Ivanovna Lapokhina, a factory worker from Moscow, published in the magazine *Woman Worker* at the end of 1935. A widow who was bringing up six children on her own in two rooms, Lapokhina was nonetheless a perfect Soviet parent. She made a contract with her children: she eschewed corporal punishment, and in return, they obtained good marks in school and spent their free time watching educational films. The dining room of the flat had a wall newspaper (the symbol and instrument of the well-regulated collective) on display and a timetable, including a roster for homework. The conclusion was: "The Lapokhins are model children at home and in school. They study well, they read in their spare time, they visit the Pioneer club and the cinema, they go to bed on time. And so they're all rosy-cheeked and healthy. Parents, schools, factories can take pride in children like this."⁴⁶

Alongside the celebration of Soviet achievements, there was the insistent denigration of life outside the Soviet Union. Children were taught that their peers who lived in the wider world, whether in capitalist countries or in their colonial domains, mostly lived in misery. In 1929 an exhibition about the ethnography of childhood organized by the Academy of Sciences already focused on the peculiarities of "other" cultures. Circumcision, for instance, was represented as a form of "mutilation" that was practiced in Africa, the Americas, and so on.⁴⁷ Non-Soviet cultures were either presented as exotic and colorful (in dance shows, or exhibitions about "primitive man") or shown to be suffering the ill effects of repression. In the most important Soviet museum devoted to worldwide ethnography, the *Kunstkamera* in Leningrad, whose largest single group of visitors was schoolchildren, typical exhibitions included "Religion in the Service of Imperialism (India)" and "The Position of Women in Oriental Countries (On the Reactionary Role of Islam)."⁴⁸

⁴⁵ See Catriona Kelly, "Riding the Magic Carpet: The Stalin Cult for Little Children," *Slavic and East European Journal* 49, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 199–224.

⁴⁶ N. Sergeeva, "Primernaia sem'ia" [An exemplary family], *Rabotnitsa* [Working woman] 12 (1935), 16.

⁴⁷ *Vystavka "Zhizn' rebenka pri svete etnografii"* [Exposition "Life of the Child in the Light of Ethnography"] (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1929), esp. p. 3.

⁴⁸ Both these exhibitions were in the 1950s (see Archive of the MAE, f. K–VI, op. 1, d. 7, l. 54), but similar exhibitions were staple fare before and afterwards (see, e.g., *ibid.*, f.

The new values also had a direct impact on the classroom. On July 7, 1936, after eighteen months of ominous denunciations in the Soviet press about the impracticality of pedology, a Central Committee decree outlawed “pedological perversions,” putting an end to the close-up study of schoolchildren and to the experiments in child creativity associated with the movement. Instead of ethnographic materials about “little Vanya,” children began to study folklore. Proverbs, tales, ditties, and the like were widely cited in readers for elementary schools. This situation continued through the rest of the Soviet era, and indeed, into the post-Soviet period.⁴⁹ Some adapted folklore was also produced for home reading.⁵⁰ To quote a leading specialist on Russian ethnography, writing in 2010: “Even now, children start being taught folklore from nursery school age, and it is on the syllabus of schools and institutes [...] In Russia, ‘folklore’ is a lot more than just folklore.”⁵¹

However, the study of folklore was itself strictly controlled, particularly during the Stalin era. Emphasis was placed on the collection (for which read, creation) of “Soviet” genres such as the *novina* (epic devoted

K–IV, op. 8, d. 51, passim (exhibition about India). The *Kunstkamera*, unlike the Russian Ethnographic Museum (see below), seems to have had a relatively limited program for children, judging by surviving materials from official reports, but schoolchildren represented a significant proportion of visitors (17,070 out of 53,320 visitors in 1957, for instance: see f. K–VI, op. 1, d. 7, l. 63). The museum had special-interest groups: for instance, in 1952, a report stated that the “young and talented” ethnographer V.G. Kudryavtsev had attended such a group (f. K–VI op. 1, d. 7, l. 36). At the same time, the museum painstakingly kept track of children’s reactions in comment-books (see, e.g., Archive of the MAE. F. K–IV, op. 8, d. 14, l. 1 ob., where a child enthusiastically commends the exhibition on Abyssinia [1936], or a 1949 expression of enthusiasm for the exhibition on “primitive man” [d. 18 l. 9 ob.], or the positive comments from 1937 about national dances [f. K–IV, op. 8, d. 14, l. 26 ob., 38 ob]).

⁴⁹ For example, in the late 1960s reader, *Rodnoe slovo: Kniga dlya chteniya v 1 klasse* [Native word. Primer for reading in the first grade], comp. E.N. Nikitina, nearly forty pages were devoted to *skazki* (folk tales) (2nd ed., Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1969, 33–72).

⁵⁰ As in the case of the much-reprinted readers produced by Olga Kapitsa, e.g., *Zaika* (Leningrad, 1936, 1946, 1950, 1951, etc.); see the online catalog of the Russian National Library.

⁵¹ A.K. Baiburin, “Nekotorye obshchie soobrazheniia o fol’klore i fol’kloristike” [Some general remarks on folklore and folkloristics], in the collection *Ot kongressa k kongressu: Navstrechu Vtoromu Vserossiiskomu kongressu fol’kloristov* [From congress to congress: Towards the Second All-Russian Congress of Folklorists], eds. A.S. Kargin and V.E. Dobrovolskaia (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Respublikanskii tsentr fol’klora, 2010), p. 43.

to a Soviet subject, such as the genius of Stalin). Other materials were often branded as “petit-bourgeois” or “corrupt,” and folklorists and ethnographers were discouraged from even collecting, let alone publishing, such aberrant material.⁵² Under the circumstances, it is understandable that collecting and studying children’s folklore (consisting as it did mostly of rhymes, insults, etc.) was not a priority. Rather, the central aim was to inculcate in children proper attitudes to the national heritage.

The folklore studied—in line with the overall “Russification” of Soviet culture during the late 1930s—was Russian.⁵³ At the same time, the Soviet Union was a multinational state, and the relationship between the different Soviet nationalities was also fundamental to the socialization of its young citizens. A crucial role in teaching children about this was played by the ethnographic museum, as can be clearly seen in the records of the State Museum of Ethnography (GME) in Leningrad, the leading center for the study of the Soviet peoples.⁵⁴

“Friendship of Peoples”: Work with Children in the State Museum of Ethnography (GME)

In museums, as elsewhere in Soviet culture, children were recognized as a particularly impressionable audience. “The impact of the museum exhibition on the lively, highly visual, and at the same time concrete perceptions of young viewers is particularly marked,” observed an official history of the GME in 1971.⁵⁵ Work with children was recognized as important right

⁵² Baiburin, “Nekotorye obshchie soobrazheniya,” 53.

⁵³ On Russification generally, see N. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1946); D. Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); D. Brandenberger and K. Platt, *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

⁵⁴ The museum was known until 1934 as the ethnographic section of the Russian Museum, from then on as the State Ethnographic Museum, and from 1948 (after amalgamation with the State Museum of the Peoples of the USSR in Moscow, whose collections were transferred to Leningrad) as the State Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR. Since 1992 it has been known as the Russian Ethnographic Museum (REM). To avoid confusion, it is consistently referred to here as GME.

⁵⁵ T.A. Kriukova and E.N. Studenetskaia, “Gosudarstvennyi muzei etnografii za piat’desiat let sovetskoi vlasti” [The State Museum of Ethnography during fifty years of Soviet rule], *Ocherki istorii muzeinogo dela v SSSR* [Sketches of the history of the museology in the USSR] 7 (Moscow: Nauka, 1971): 113.

at the beginning of the Soviet period, when the museum was still the ethnographic section of the Russian Museum. In 1921 there was organized “a cycle of lectures in the Sections of Historical and Contemporary Art for teachers, students at institutions of higher education, and pupils in the higher grades of schools, and organizations offering post-school education.”⁵⁶ In 1934⁵⁷ a special “Schools Commission” was set up in the museum, which organized excursions for children, as well as a special “Schools Room” (whose activities will be described in detail below). While these initiatives came to an end when war broke out (the GME was closed during the Siege of Leningrad, and through the late 1940s, because of war damage), the museum’s Methodological Council continued to organize activities directed at children once the museum reopened and throughout the Soviet period.

The GME’s activities from the 1930s to the 1980s were a vivid illustration of the central priorities of Soviet museum work, and also of how these fluctuated over time.⁵⁸ As the anthropologist Dmitry Baranov has argued, during the 1930s, the exhibition was generally designed “to create new contexts that placed the pre-revolutionary past and the [Soviet]

⁵⁶ “Otchetnoe svedenie o rabote muzeia za 1921 g.” [Annual report on the work of the museum for the year 1921], AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 75, l. 5 ob.

⁵⁷ In Kriukova and Studenetskaia, “Gosudarstvennyi muzei,” 51, the date of the founding of the Schools Commission is given as “the mid-1930s.” The first minutes of meetings of the Commission preserved in AREM date from early 1935 (see f. 2, op. 1, d. 535, l. 12). However, as “Protokol no. 12” dates from January 27, 1935, (ibid., l. 12), and “Protokol no. 16” from March 26, 1935 (ibid., l. 20), it seems reasonable to suppose that the first meeting took place in the spring or summer of 1934, which is supported by the fact that the first event organized by the Commission—the first “Schoolchildren’s Day”—took place on December 23, 1934.

⁵⁸ On the work of the GME with the masses generally, see Kriukova and Studenetskaia, “Gosudarstvennyi muzei,” 9–120; *Rossiiskii etnograficheskii muzei, 1902–2002* [The Russian Ethnographic Museum, 1902–2002] (St. Petersburg: Slavia, 2001), 45; Dmitry Baranov, “Archaising Culture: The Museum of Ethnography,” in *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*, eds. M. Bassin and C. Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 73–90; F. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2005), chap. 5. Already in the 1920s, the GME started to set the tone for other museums in the Soviet Union. In 1924, employees of the GME gave consultations to twenty-nine provincial museums (Kriukova and Studenetskaia, “Gosudarstvennyi muzei,” p. 22). In 1979 the GME was made All-Soviet Center of Scholarly Methodology in Ethnographic Museology (O.A. Botiakova, *Kul’turno-obrazovatel’naia deiatel’nost’ etnograficheskogo muzeia: napravleniia, formy, metody* [Cultural and educational activity of the Ethnographic Museum. Direction, forms, methods] (St. Petersburg: REM, 2010), p. 5.

present in stark contrast.”⁵⁹ Naturally, work with children also strove to highlight this contrast. As a teacher who visited the museum in 1939 approvingly remarked, “It’s good that kids studying how our economy is growing and developing don’t forget how tough things were back in tsarist Russia. As you can see, for instance, from the model showing how people used to plough in the past and how they plough now.”⁶⁰

Such Soviet patriotism, as manifested in the relentless opposition of “now” and “then,” was ubiquitous. For instance, an excursion on “The Peoples of the USSR” organized for grades 7 and 8 in 1935, according to the description given at the time, “emphasizes the colonial politics of tsarism, which held back the development of productive forces, and the popular politics [*narpolitika*] of Soviet rule, which has drawn formerly oppressed and backward peoples into the process of socialist construction.”⁶¹ A process of circular argument was in operation: tsarist “colonial politics” had “held back” development, but the Soviet “equality of nations” fostered development. Since Soviet rule was not colonial, it was progressive, and since it was progressive, it was not colonial.⁶²

This perception remained canonical after the war as well, but there was also a new twist. From the late 1940s, the idea of “the Slavic Brotherhood” started to dominate exhibition policy at the museum generally.⁶³ There was a concomitant emphasis on the leading role of the Slavic peoples, but above all the Russians, in the Soviet *Zivilisationsprozess*.⁶⁴ Excursion leaders were also expected to stress the distinction between the process of absorption of territory in the Soviet Union and “colonization.” Difficult cases were passed over in silence—“Western Ukraine should not be mentioned,” a guide was instructed in 1980. Even the pre-revolutionary era was now perceived in terms of non-colonial processes of territorial

⁵⁹ Baranov, “Archaising Culture.” Hirsch, *Empire of the Nations*, chap. 5, sees these developments, quite reasonably, as a kind of “de-ethnographization” of the museum.

⁶⁰ AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 461, l. 8.

⁶¹ AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 535, l. 4.

⁶² From an external viewpoint, of course, the resemblance to colonial discourse is striking: British children were also taught about the empire’s civilizing mission as well as its military victories (I can remember the tail end of this myself at primary school in the 1960s). See also A. Pagden, *Peoples and Empires: Europeans and the Rest of the World, from Antiquity to the Present* (London: Phoenix, 2002) (my thanks to Willard Sunderland for this reference).

⁶³ See Baranov, “Archaising Culture.”

⁶⁴ See Kriukova and Studenetskaia, “Gosudarstvennyi muzei,” 73: “The Russians are the largest and the leading people in the Soviet Union; their role in the history of all the other peoples is very significant.”

absorption. "One should not say that the Nenets were 'annexed' to Russia; one should say that they entered the Russian Empire," was another comment from 1980.⁶⁵ Another change was that the emphasis on modernization as a goal was now soft-pedaled. Instead, "national color" and "national specificity" were emphasized.⁶⁶ Rather than "then" versus "now," exhibitions recreated the "traditional culture" of a period that was vaguely defined as "the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries"—a definition that excluded from view such historical ruptures as the Emancipation Reform of 1861 and the Revolution of 1917.

"The Fate of Little Maison": Catering to the "Child's Eye"

The work with children carried out at the GME, like the work with the "masses" generally, was aimed at propagandizing views of the Soviet Union as the home of political progress and "friendship of peoples." At all periods, the ethnography of childhood was barely a concern. A specialty of the museum was "narrative excursions" [*fabul'nye ekskursii*] aimed at children, which made the life of an invented person into an exemplum of the historical development of a given people. As T.A. Studenetskaia and T.A. Kriukova, two long-term employees at the museum who had worked in the Schools Room during the 1930s, recalled, the first such "narrative excursion," "The Fate of Little Maison," told children about "three generations of Uzbek women, from the mid nineteenth century to the present day. In line with this, Maison the Soviet girl, the granddaughter of old Maikhon, who had been brought up in feudal Bukhara, was constantly assigned characteristics that would make her seem immediate and near to the viewers: she would do parachute jumps, build the Fergana Canal, take part in electing the local soviet. In other words, do anything that the excursion leader thought it was important children should be told about at a given time."⁶⁷ Of course, in such representations, childhood was a

⁶⁵ AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 1969, l. 14, l. 40.

⁶⁶ From the internal discussions of excursions taking place in 1970, AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 1668, l. 5, l. 20. Cf. the critical remarks of Kriukova and Studenetskaia ("Gosudarstvennyi muzei," 49) on museum practices in the late 1920s and early 1930s: "the museum collections became clogged up with ancillary objects that had nothing to do with ethnography. In order to represent the present, the museum was clogged up with wall newspapers, factory-made wares, books, historical documents, items *with no national coloration*" (my emphasis).

⁶⁷ Kriukova and Studenetskaya, "Gosudarstvennyi muzei," 52.

secondary concern: the main focus was on what happened to “little Maison” (or Askhara, or whoever else) when she or he grew up.⁶⁸

Just as before the revolution, so after 1917, “there was no centralized collecting of materials to do with children; they ended up in the museum by chance,” as an experienced museum worker recalled in 2010.⁶⁹ There was almost no systematic work with children as informants either. An exception was a brief period in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when, as part of the revival of interest in “local studies,” children started to be asked to collect ethnographic material as part of extracurricular activities at school. The archive of the Russian Ethnographic Museum includes a reply to a Pioneer group in the Siberian city of Kemerovo with advice on how to collect material from members of the Shorts and Teleut ethnic minorities.⁷⁰ In this period, GME staff also began setting up special ethnographic expeditions for children.⁷¹ But expedition work with children did not depend on a special child-centered program: there was, for instance, no suggestion that children might like to concentrate on work with informants their own age. On the contrary, they were told that “you should, with the help of local teachers, find what we call a good *informant* [emphasis original], and such people are usually elderly, with a good memory and a friendly character.” Local children were mentioned only in the capacity of people who might be able to serve as translators.⁷²

Thus the GME’s work with members of the younger generation posited that children were primarily vessels for the ethnographic knowledge of adults. However, this does not mean that children were seen purely as passive. On the contrary, excursion guides at the GME were warned in

⁶⁸ On Askhara (a little Ossetian boy who was abducted, but after many adventures survived, and was able to introduce his son to Kirov), see AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 808, l. 5.

⁶⁹ From the author’s notes on an interview with Ol’ga Botiakova, the head of the children’s section at the REM, who also worked at the museum in the Soviet period. Field diary, September 15, 2010.

⁷⁰ AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 1383, ll. 1–7.

⁷¹ See “Protokol metodicheskogo soveta GME” [Protocol of the methodological council of the GME], March 14, 1961, AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 1413, ll. 22–23, where there is a discussion about the plan to take members of the club for amateur ethnographers in School No. 182 to Lodeinoe pole (a remote region in northeast Leningrad province), “but we still have to consult with the Leningrad Regional Committee of the Communist Party.”

⁷² See the letter to the Young Pioneers of Kemerovo, AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 1383, ll. 4–5. The local museum (*kraevedcheskii muzei*) in Tikhvin contains an interesting display showing how the collection, mostly destroyed in the war, was replaced by archaeological digs and other initiatives in which schoolchildren participated (author’s field notes, June 2012), but once again, material to do with childhood was not prioritized.

1935 that “you should not impede children’s initiative, their capacity for action.”⁷³ Children might not play a direct role in deciding the content of exhibitions and excursions, but, in the 1930s at least, they contributed to these. A teacher who visited on March 28, 1939, commented approvingly, “I especially liked the fact that the children who had prepared some of the items on view themselves told us about the works they had made.”⁷⁴ In later periods of the museum’s history, children did not lead excursions, but considerable efforts were made to tailor the style of the excursions to their perceived needs. For instance, an excursion titled “Russian Folk Creation” used many proverbs and stories to bring “traditional” culture to life. Sometimes children were even allowed to handle objects as a way of making them familiar with these.⁷⁵

The ethnographic museums’ work with children, like the study of ethnography and folklore in school, played a dual role. It taught children about the history of the nation, but at the same time about their role as children. Ethnographic material was not only—and perhaps not even mainly—the subject of rational analysis. It suggested a way of viewing the world imaginatively, offering a picture of the national culture, and above all, Russian rural culture that was emotionally loaded. Whether children chose to act, or were encouraged to act, as informants themselves, or whether it never occurred to them that they could hold such a role, they were likely to come across images of the Russian village and products of “folk creation,” as well as material about “the friendship of nations,” during their early years. Such images had considerable social force. While their impact is hard to assess, the tenacity, in the post-Soviet period, of the attachment to an idealized rural past, and of the conviction that Russia

⁷³ “Protokol zasedaniia Shkol’noi komissii” [Protocols of the sessions of the school commission], January 27, 1935, AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 535, l. 10. Cf. the remark of E.N. Studenetskaia in 1961: “It is vital that children’s capacity for action not be stifled.”

⁷⁴ “Kniga otzyvov o rabote komnaty shkol’nika pri muzee (1933–1939 gg.)” [Book of statements concerning the work of the Chamber of Pupils at the museum], AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 461, l. 8. On work with children generally, see “Protokol zasedaniia Shkol’noi komissii ot 27 ianvaria 1935 g.” [Protocols of the session of the school commission, January 27, 1935], AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 535, ll. 13–13 ob.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., “Protokol zasedaniia Metodicheskogo soveta” [Protocol of the session of the methodological council], March 23, 1961, AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 535, l. 23, where Studenetskaia described a game she used, showing children objects, explaining what they were, and then covering them with a cloth, after which children would take the objects out from under the cloth and describe them. On proverbs etc., see, e.g., AREM, f. 2, op. 1, d. 1969, ll. 27–28. In her interview with me on September 15, 2010, O.A. Botiakova gave a comparable account of work with children, based on personal experience.

was never an “empire” of the Western kind, exploiting its “colonies,” suggests that representations of this kind were highly influential, albeit at the subconscious level.⁷⁶

* * *

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the understandings of children that prevailed in Russian (and later Soviet) ethnography were directly linked to broader social concerns with the position of the nation’s youth, which had at least as significant an influence in shaping textual production as purely academic concerns. In the late 1890s, the first attempts were made to classify children’s folklore as a specific phenomenon; in the early twentieth century, efforts began to be made specifically to collect such folklore. While the general trend was still to see children as the passive objects of adult agency (a model that in some respects remained intact until the late twentieth century), some scholars, particularly Georgii Vinogradov, were starting to take an interest in children’s capacity for autonomous creation and invention, in line with the widespread interest at this time in art and literature produced by children, and also in their capacity for independent political and social action.

The widespread development of “pedagogical anthropology” in this period was, however, largely shaped by instrumental considerations.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ For an example of resistance to the idea that the Russian Empire might be described as “colonial,” see the review by Igor’ Grachev and Pavel Rykin of Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe*, “A European’s [sic] View of Asiatic History,” *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* no. 4 (2007): 395–401, http://anthropologie.kunstkamera.ru/files/pdf/eng004/eng4_reviews_all.pdf.

⁷⁷ This was and is most clearly seen in the sub-discipline of *etnopedagogika* (ethno-pedagogy), alternatively known as “folk pedagogy,” whose *raison d’être* was to present late Soviet (and later, post-Soviet) official values, such as strongly defined gender roles, personal hygiene, and politeness to adults, as embedded in traditional cultures. Thus writers from different Soviet republics would dress up the same basic message by reference to local folk tales, proverbs, traditional heroes, and practices. See, e.g., G.N. Volkov, *Etnopedagogika* [Ethno-pedagogy] (Cheboksary: Chuvashskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1974); K. Pirliev, *Nekotorye voprosy etnopedagogiki turkmenskogo naroda* [Some questions of the ethno-pedagogy of the Turkmen people] (Ashkabad: Turkmen-skii gosudarstvennyi universitet im. A. M. Gor’kogo, 1980); Sh. A. Mirzoev, *Narodnaia pedagogika Dagestana* [People’s pedagogy of Dagestan] (Makhachkala: Daguchpedgiz, 1986); Z.P. Vasil’tsova, *Mudrye zapovedi narodnoi pedagogiki* [Treasures of the heritage of the people’s pedagogy] (Moscow: Pedagogika, 1988); A. Izmailov, *Narodnaia pedagogika: pedagogicheskie vozzreniya narodov Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana* [People’s pedagogy. Pedagogical views of the peoples of Central Asia and of Kazakhstan] (Mos-

Educational reformers were concerned not so much with recording childhood experience for its own sake as with producing research material that would make the state education and socialization of children more effective. When the objectives of state educational administrators changed, specific work on children ceased, to be revived only in the post-Soviet period.⁷⁸ The study of “peasant life” in schools was replaced by the study of folklore, and instead of engaging in “local studies,” pupils were expected to form a grasp of the Soviet Union as a multinational state. At this

cow: Pedagogika, 1991); and also such post-Soviet publications as Evgenii E. Chapko, “Etnopedagogika segodnia” [Ethno-pedagogy today], *Magistr* no. 3 (1995): 74–84; L.S. Alekseeva, *Narodnaia mudrost’ o vospitanii prekrasnogo* [Folk wisdom on the subject of aesthetic education] (Piatigorsk: Izd. Piatigorskii gosudarstvennyi lingvisticheskii universitet, 2002). The fundamental standpoint of “folk/ethno-pedagogy” can be grasped from Vasil’tsova’s comment (p. 4): “We should not only pay close attention to those traditions of educating the growing generation that have already existed for centuries and have been cherished by our people, but reflect on them, absorb them, open the path for them to enter our lives.” Its practical strategies are made clear by a set of recommended topics for senior students in schools (aged 16–17) in Mirzoev, p. 177: “The ideal of the harmoniously developed, perfect man from the mountain peoples”; “The ideal of the perfect woman from the mountain peoples”; “The traditions of friendship and brotherhood of the nations of Dagestan”; “The noble rules of mountain decency at dances, at traditional festivals, outside the family and the *aul* [mountain village]”; “Dagestanis as builders of the Baikal-Amur Railway and Samara Carburetor Factory.” In due course, the rediscovery of “traditions” made an important contribution to the process of inventing a self-declared non-Soviet national identity that took place in the late Soviet and post-Soviet era, but this important subject lies outside the scope of my discussion here. For a short overview of the process in Russia, see Catriona Kelly, “‘The Traditions of Our History’: ‘Tradition’ as Framework for National Identity in Post-Stalinist and Post-Soviet Russia,” in *Solidarities and Loyalties in Russian Culture*, eds. Ph. Bullock, C. Ingerflom, I. Ohayon, and A. Winstein (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, forthcoming).

⁷⁸ After the publication of Igor’ Kon’s *Rebenok i obshchestvo* [Child and society] (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), interest in the anthropology of childhood revived. Important studies of the post-Soviet period include M. Osorina, *Sekretnyi mir detei: v prostranstve mira vzroslykh* [The secret world of the children in the field of the world of the adult] (St. Petersburg: Piter, 1999); A.F. Belousov, ed., *Russkii shkol’nyi fol’klor: Ot “vyzyvanii” Pikovoi damy do semeinykh rasskazov* [Russian school folklore. From “conjurations” of the Queen of Spades to family stories] (Moscow: Lodomir/Ast, 1998); M.P. Cherednikova, *Sovetskaia russkaia detskaia mifologiiia v kontekste faktov traditsionnoi kul’tury i detskoï psikhologii* [The Soviet Russian child mythology in the context of the facts of traditional culture and the psychology of the child] (Moscow: Nauka, 1995). Works have also appeared in English: see, e.g., E.K. Zelensky, “Popular Children’s Culture in Post-Perestroika Russia: Songs of Innocence and Experience Revisited,” in *Consuming Russia*, ed. A. Barker (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 138–160.

point, the ethnographic museum came into its own as a center of official information and propaganda. The excursions and museum work organized for children were tied to the general objectives of contemporary “mass work” and to the school program. But at the same time, considerable attention was paid to making the museum accessible and interesting for children. This attention seems to have paid off since the representations of “folk life” propounded in ethnographic museums proved considerably more enduring, and perhaps also more effective, than the desultory and contradictory, yet striking, representations of children made by adults for adults.

Siberian Ruptures: Dilemmas of Ethnography in an Imperial Situation

Sergey Glebov

The very word “Siberia” is contentious. Originating in the post-Mongol Tatar khanates, “Siberia” never had clear political or geographical boundaries. While it began beyond the Urals and was delimited in the north by the Arctic Ocean, it was never clear whether the steppes of present-day Kazakhstan, the lands along the Amur River, the enormous Yakut *oblast* or the Maritime Province were part of “Siberia.” Culturally, the mix of nomadic, semi-nomadic, and settled populations—native Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tatars, Khanty and Mansi, Yakuts, Buryats, and others—spoke widely different languages (Turkic, Uralo-Altaic, Paleoasiatic, etc.) and professed different beliefs (Islam, Christianity, Lamaist Buddhism, animistic shamanism and syncretic cults like “Burkhanism”). Even today, while from the perspective of Moscow everything to the east of the Urals is in Siberia, the inhabitants of Vladivostok or Khabarovsk are likely to disagree.¹

Despite this lack of clarity about the specific geographic content of the term, few scholars failed to note the crucial importance of Siberia in Russian imperial history. One of the earliest and territorially largest acquisitions, the land and peoples beyond the Ural Mountains served the tsars of

¹ For a discussion of recent studies of spatial dimensions of Siberian history, see Jan Kusber, “Mastering the Imperial Space: The Case of Siberia; Approaches and Recent Directions of Research,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2008): 52–74. See also Anatoliy Remnev, ed., *Sibir’ v sostave Rossiiskoi imperii* [Siberia in the Russian Empire] (Moscow: NLO, 2009); Anatoliy Remnev, “Siberia and the Far East in the Imperial Geography of Power,” in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, eds. J. Burbank, M. von Hagen, and A. Remnev (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 425–453. See also Mark Bassin, “Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *American Historical Review* 96, no. 3 (June 1991): 763–794.

Moscow and Russian emperors as sources of precious furs, for a long time Russia's only native currency. It may not be coincidental that Russia's rapid expansion in the west, first in Left Bank Ukraine and later in the Baltics and Poland-Lithuania, followed the acquisition of fur-rich Siberia. As the supply of fur declined in the eighteenth century, the Nerchinsk mines of Transbaikalia began providing silver and gold to the imperial treasury. In the late nineteenth century, Siberia began to loom large on the minds of imperial bureaucrats, who saw in it an inexhaustible source of land for impoverished peasants of European Russia. Siberia was to be reclaimed from wilderness with the help of modern technology and railroads, colonized and transformed from a cold and unwelcoming wasteland roamed by backward savages into a populous and prosperous part of Russia itself.² Siberia's immense size gave the Russians a sense that their empire, which bordered on China, Mongolia, and Islamic Central Asia, had a global reach. In the twentieth century, Siberia's territorial breadth also gave the USSR an immense military advantage over the Nazis, as the Soviets evacuated their industries and people into the depths of the continent's interior. Stalin's industrialization witnessed the rise of giant industrial centers such as Magnitogorsk, and the stress on science in the post-Stalin period helped Novosibirsk develop into one of the intellectual centers of the Soviet Union.

Siberia's immense natural resources even played a central role in the history of the Cold War. Prior to the 1950s, over half of Soviet exports consisted mainly of things that grew on land. Beginning in the 1960s, the USSR mostly exported things taken from under the ground, and most of these things were mined in Siberia. Siberian oil, natural gas, gold, diamonds—in short, as Soviet Siberian patriots liked to stress, “Mendeleev's entire periodic table” contained in Siberia's ground—enabled post-Soviet Russia to weather its economic crises. The same resources continue to be Russia's main export and underwrite its geopolitical interests and influence its domestic policies.³ As Dominic Lieven argued, Siberia gave post-Soviet Russia a chance to “experience the loss of empire and yet remain a

² See, for example, *Kolonizatsiia Sibiri v sviazi s obshchim pereselencheskim voprosom* [Colonization of Siberia in connection with the general question of resettlement] (St. Petersburg: Chancellery of the Committee of Ministers, 1900). For a recent discussion of colonization in Russian imperial history, see N. Breyfogle, A. Schrader, and W. Sunderland, eds., *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

³ For instance, Marshall Goldman, *Petrostate: Putin, Power, and the New Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

great power, something that geography made impossible for the overseas, maritime empires of Britain, France, Spain and the Netherlands.”⁴

Despite the region's uncontested importance, its status in Russian and Soviet polity was and remains unclear. A result of a conquest, a destination for colonists, a land that had been populated by culturally different populations (“savages,” “heathens,” “aliens,” or “nationalities”), Siberia is nevertheless an inseparable part of the Russian national myth. A strong, free, greedy, self-sufficient peasant-Sibiriak (an ethnic Russian from Siberia) is quintessentially Russian, and Soviet epic bestsellers and blockbusters, such as V. Shishkov's novel *Ugrium River* (1928–1933) or the TV series *Eternal Call* (1973), underscored the centrality of Siberia to ethnic Russian identity (and, in the latter case, to the Soviet project). This appropriation of Siberia by the Russian national myth was almost total. Russian literature did not produce a Siberian Hadji Murat, or anything similar to images of American Indians. Only in the early twentieth century did the officer, geographer, and writer Vladimir Arsen'ev craft his partly factual story about Dersu Uzala, a Gol'd (Nanai) hunter and guide from the Ussuri region in the Russian Far East.⁵ Immortalized by Kurosawa's famous movie, Dersu Uzala remains the most recognizable native Siberian, the carrier of autochthonic knowledge and ecological sensitivities. In Soviet popular culture, this role was filled by another Nanai, the pop singer Kola Beldy, who performed hits (in classic European vocal style, of course) while appearing as a generic “northern native” wearing a parka. Late-Soviet-era TV viewers were treated to the miniseries *White Shaman* (1982), in which an archetypical Soviet narrative of a native person “recognizing” the truth of communist teaching and Soviet rule was cast against the background of Chukchi culture and history.

It might well be expected that a similar development occurred in Russian ethnography. Yet the history of describing diversity in Siberia in the imperial situation reveals a different trajectory. Often the centers of political and scholarly power did not coincide in imperial Russia, and Siberian ethnography was not a simple colonial gaze directed from the imperial center onto the remote colony. Neither was ethnographic knowledge necessarily a servant of imperial interests, broadly speaking. Rather, it developed under multiple influences and through different agents, whose stance with respect to the Russian imperial government was not unequivocal.

⁴ Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 224.

⁵ V. Arsen'ev, *Dersu Uzala* (Vladivostok: 1923).

Scholars of Russian history have long debated the applicability of post-colonial studies and of Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism" to the Russian case.⁶ For practitioners of the new imperial history, though, the central question is not so much whether Russia can fit neatly into some archetypical "Western" experience or whether it followed its own *Sonderweg*.⁷ Rather, we suggest that historical experiences of the complex and multilayered imperial society could provide multiple vantage points from which to explore and complicate scholarly categories and approaches. To that end, in what follows I will focus on four instances of the production of knowledge about Siberian human diversity. The first instance was the eighteenth-century, largely German, cataloguing of Siberian peoples. The second, defined by the politics of comparison, was the Siberian regionalists' quest to prove that the Siberian natives were dying out. The third instance was the late-nineteenth-century "Sibiriakov expedition," a large-scale and multi-field exploration of northeastern Siberia by revolutionary-exiles-turned-ethnographers. Finally, I discuss the scholarly and ethnographic work of Waclaw Sieroszewski, a Polish revolutionary who became the ethnographer of the Yakuts, as well as a Siberian variant of Joseph Conrad. To be sure, these four cases do not exhaust the

⁶ Some examples include D. Brower and E. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1997); C. Clay, "Russian Ethnographers in the Service of Empire, 1856–1862," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 1 (1995): 45–61; N. Knight, "Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851–1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?" *Slavic Review* 59, no. 1 (2000): 74–100; A. Khalid, "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism"; N. Knight, "On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid"; M. Todorova, "Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution on the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 4 (2000): 691–728; D. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, "A Subtle Matter—Orientalism"; A. Etkind, "The Saved Man's Burden, or the Inner Colonization of Russia"; N. Knight, "Was Russia Its Own Orient? Reflections on the Contributions of Etkind and Schimmelpenninck on the Debate on Orientalism"; E. Campbell, "On the Question of Orientalism in Russia (in the Second Half of the Nineteenth–Early Twentieth Centuries)," *Ab Imperio* 3, no. 1 (2002): 239–311. For a recent work questioning the applicability of Said's work to the Russian case, see Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁷ For a statement on the new imperial history of Russia, see "Introduction," in I. Gerasimov et al., eds., *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); on the *Sonderweg* interpretations of Russian history, see *Ab Imperio* 2, no. 1 (2002): 15–101 (contributions by Carl E. Schorske, Hans van der Loo, Gunilla-Friederike Budde, Jurgen Kocka, and Manfred Hildermeier).

wealth of ethnographic studies in Siberia over the three centuries.⁸ Still, they remain central to the evolution of ethnographic ideas about Siberia in imperial Russia.

* * *

Although Soviet historians of Russian ethnography would often begin their narratives with the reports sent by Muscovite servitors (*sluzhilye liudi*) and Cossacks, claiming that descriptions of Siberian peoples in these reports contained a wealth of ethnographic information, the conquerors of Siberia had little interest in native peoples. Their encounter with Siberia was nothing similar to the dramatic meeting by Europeans of those with profoundly different lifestyles in the New World, Africa, or Asia. The conquest of Siberia followed Moscow's relations, both hostile and peaceful, with the Tatar khanates, and the first native Siberians would have appeared to the Russians as little different from the various Turkic and Finno-Ugric peoples of the Volga-Kama basin. Servitors and Cossacks primarily reported geographic locations of settlements, and the types of cattle and weaponry Siberian natives possessed, as well as whether they paid tribute and to whom. Language, beliefs, or the history of Siberian peoples were generally disregarded in favor of more practical knowledge.⁹

This changed under Peter the Great's reign. Peter's fascination with Dutch ways is well-known, and the tsar personally met one of the first European ethnographers, the polymath magistrate of Amsterdam, director of the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, diplomat, and theorist of shipbuilding, Nicolaes Witsen. Witsen visited Moscow twice and apparently continued correspondence with his acquaintances there to collect material for his monumental work *Noord en Oost Tartarije*.¹⁰ The book, undoubtedly based on information received from sources with intimate knowledge of the country, became the first ethnographic study of Siberia. Stunningly, Witsen's work contained not just the then-most-accurate maps (likely based on Remezov's) but also descriptions of customs, lifestyles, dwellings, economies, and

⁸ The standard work on Siberian ethnography, which retains much of its value to this day, is A.N. Pypin, *Istoriia russkoi etnografii* [History of Russian ethnography] (St. Petersburg: 1898), vol. 4 (Belorussia i Sibir'), 177–462; for a contemporary overview of state-sponsored expeditions to just one region of Siberia, see D.A. Shirina and V.N. Ivanov, *Peterburgskaia Akademiia Nauk i Severo-Vostok Sibiri* [Petersburg Academy of Sciences and Northeastern Siberia] (Moscow: Nauka, 1994).

⁹ Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), esp. 11–46.

¹⁰ N. Witsen, *Noord en Oost Tartarije* (Amsterdam, 1697).

languages of many Siberian peoples. Written some sixty years after the conquest of Eastern Siberia, Witsen's work already contained fairly accurate samples of the vocabulary of languages like Yakut or Buryat.

With several notable exceptions (for instance, the work of Stepan Krasheninnikov on Kamchatka), most scholarly studies of Siberian peoples in the eighteenth century were produced by Germans. Inspired by inquiries and requests from the European scholars such as Nicolaes Witsen and Isaak Leibnitz, Peter ordered the geographical exploration of the easternmost parts of his domain.¹¹ Northeastern Siberia quickly became the favorite playground of German explorers, frantically classifying and describing the area's populations and transportation routes, minerals and landscapes, and flora and fauna. The list of scholars who participated in the massive effort to defamiliarize and objectify Siberian peoples and cultures included Daniel Messerschmidt, Johann Eberhard Fischer, Gerhard Friedrich Müller, Johann Georg Gmelin, Jakob Lindenau, and Stepan Krasheninnikov.¹²

The complexity of Siberia's ethnic makeup could not be entirely cataloged by the meager resources of these explorers (even if the Kamchatka expedition was the most grandiose scholarly effort undertaken by any European state at that time), and often imperial institutions dispatched questionnaires to local Siberian administrations, demanding precise information on the geography, ethnography, economy, and history of the native peoples.¹³ M.O. Kosven argued in his thorough research of various reports to the imperial authorities on Siberian peoples and lands in the eighteenth century that those reports represented instances of "local ethnography." However, unlike works by German scholars, none of the re-

¹¹ L.S. Berg, *Otkrytie Kamchatki i ekspeditsii Beringa* [Discovery of Kamchatka and the Bering expedition] (Moscow and Leningrad, 1946).

¹² See, for example, Walter Kirchner, ed., *A Siberian Journey: The Journal of Hans Jakob Fries, 1774–1776* (London: Cass, 1974). Especially useful is the introduction (pp. 3–47), with its excellent overview of major travelers and explorers. Kirchner lists thirty-four (sic) European and Russian travelers and explorers before 1775 who left Siberian travel accounts.

¹³ Müller in particular left numerous questionnaires during his many years of travel in Siberia. See J.L. Black and D.K. Buse, eds., *G.-F. Müller and Siberia, 1733–1743* (Kingston: Limestone Press, 1989). Such questionnaires were composed by scholars such as I. Kirillov and Vasilii Tatishchev. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Senate requested descriptions of territories in Siberia following specific questionnaires. See, for example, *Opisanie Irkutskogo namestnichestva 1792 goda* [Description of the Irkutsk namestnichestvo, 1792] (Novosibirsk, 1988), 3–24, for an overview of questionnaires and descriptions of Siberia in the eighteenth century.

ports was actually published until the nineteenth century or was critically evaluated by a community of scholars.¹⁴ Although those reports indeed contained a wealth of ethnographic information, it was hardly ethnographic scholarship in the new, modern form, which became increasingly prominent in the eighteenth-century Russian Empire.

One might well argue that it is exactly these state-sponsored descriptions of Siberian peoples that illustrate the connections between the imperial power and the emerging ethnographic scholarship on non-European peoples. After all, introducing the work of Stepan Krasheninnikov, a Russian student of German professors, Gerhard Friedrich Müller, one of the founders of Siberian studies in eighteenth-century Russia, argued that “one should not in the least doubt that those persons appointed to administer state affairs very much need to have precise information on the lands entrusted to them [...]. [They need to know] what kinds of inhabitants are there, where do they live, in what numbers, and how they differ between themselves in language, condition of body, preferences, customs, industries, laws, and everything else that belongs here; where and which are the remains of ancient years, how the conquest or peopling of a particular land occurred; where are this land’s boundaries, who are its neighbors, and in what relations the inhabitants are to these neighbors [...].”¹⁵ However, one should take into consideration the position of German scholars in the Russian service. Largely followers of contemporary ideas, such as cameralism, these German scholars viewed Russians themselves as in need of civilization. Telling, for example, is one of the reports by the Holstein-born *projecteur* Heinrich von Fick to Peter the Great (on the establishment of the Academy of Sciences): “it is to be noted that all European peoples established the beginning of the happy condition in which they now find themselves through academies and schools; in particular it is known that 300 years ago in England, Denmark, and Sweden there was semi-barbarity; people were hardly aware of studies and moral scholarship.” For Fick, this situation was supported by the papacy’s attempt to maintain its grip over the superstitious peoples. “The Germans,” Fick continued, “were considered by the Romans to be as wild as savages in America are considered today. And now we find

¹⁴ M.O. Kosven, “Mestnaia etnografiia Sibiri v XVIII veke” [Local ethnography in seventeenth-century Siberia], in *Ocherki istorii russkoi etnografii, fol’kloristiki i antropologii* [Outlines of the history of Russian ethnography, folklore studies, and anthropology], no. 6 (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), 5–44.

¹⁵ G.F. Müller, “Predislovie” [Foreword], in S. Krasheninnikov, *Opisanie zemli Kamchatki* [Description of the Kamchatka lands] (Imperial Academy of Sciences: St. Petersburg, 1755), 1–2.

the German nation liberated from the papacy to be more learned and civilized [*polirter*] than those who are still under its yoke.” And so, Fick believed, may well be the fate of the Russians: “Now it is well known that for a hundred years, the former glorious rulers in Russia have taken great pains to introduce good laws and regulations [*gute Gesetze und Ordnungen ein zu fuehren*], yet this labor could not bear the desired fruit for the people, because the education of the youth could not be pursued due to bans on travel, the studies of foreign languages, and books [...]”¹⁶ The Russians were different from the natives of Siberia, whom Fick later called “good and orderly subjects,” in their degree of civilization and not in any inherent features. Russians were good empire-builders only insofar as they followed the prescribed path of enlightenment and civilization; their race did not endow them with the right to rule.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the unprecedented effort to explore, describe, catalog, and classify natural phenomena and the human populations of Siberia was underway, turning Siberia into one of the most important arenas for the study of non-European peoples. This “conceptual conquest”¹⁷ of Siberia was impressive: Müller, issued instructions to the members of the Second Kamchatka Expedition to guide their efforts in describing Siberian populations. The instructions consisted of 923 questions about each particular people, from their language to physical features to the minutiae of everyday life.

As Han Vermeulen persuasively argued, it was in Siberia that a German branch of ethnography, *Voelkerbeschreibung*, largely developed. Siberia was emerging as one of the crucial terrains in which the art of description was utilized to make sense of what was now seen as unprecedented human diversity.¹⁸ As Brian O’Gilvie demonstrated, by the seven-

¹⁶ Heinrich Fick, *Unterschiedliche unterthaenigste Vorstellungen und Anmerckungen betreffende die Beförderung des Civil wesens und guten Ordnungen auch Ihre Keyserl. M^t und Dehro Reichsinteresse. Beilage 5 // A. R. Cederberg. Heinrich Fick. Ein Beitrag zur Russischen Geschichte des XVIII. Jahrhunderts* [Diverse comments on the promotion of civil services and on the good order of the imperial majesty’s interest (...)] (Tartu/Dorpat, 1930), 107–109.

¹⁷ The term “conceptual conquest” was used by Francine Hirsch to describe how modern scholarly knowledge was used to manage Soviet populations. See F. Hirsch, *The Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2005).

¹⁸ For the origins of the science of describing, see Brian O’Gilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Han F. Vermeulen, *Early History of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German*

teenth century, studies of classic texts were superseded by efforts to catalog and classify natural objects among European scientists. In the science of human diversity, a similar process was underway, with the watershed marked by the publication of Nicolaes Witsen's above-mentioned study of "Tartarije," which provided the first taxonomic (linguistic) grid for the peoples of Northeast Asia.¹⁹ Often developed in the context of what Larry Wolff called "philosophical geography," a vision of the world informed by an increasingly global and comparative map of "civilization," the mapping of Siberia produced different but equally de-familiarizing discourses. For instance, John Ledyard, an American traveler who managed to get as far as Iakutsk in Siberia before being deported by a suspicious Catherine II, simply and unequivocally equated Siberian native peoples to their American counterparts: "the Tartars resemble the aborigines of America: they are the same people—the most antient [sic], & most numerous of any other, & had not a small sea divided them, they would all have still been known by the same name. The cloak of civilization sits as ill upon them as our American Tartars—they have been a long time Tartars & it will be a long time before they are any other kind of people."²⁰ While Ledyard's view of civilization was predetermined by race, a crucial category for his native country,²¹ German scholars often utilized other measures of civilization. It is also to this process of de-familiarization of the empire that we owe the ethnic taxonomy of Siberia. The key concept of eighteenth-century ethnography (*Völkerbeschreibung*) in Siberia was *Volk*. Defined by language and customs, each *Volk* had to have its own past and heroes, rulers, and battles. In his *Beschreibung der Jakuten*, Jakob Lindenau suggested that the Yakuts had a ruling family, Toion Usa, and tracked its lineage. According to Lindenau, Russian power over the Yakuts was consolidated as Tygyn, the ruler of the land, was captured and imprisoned by the

Enlightenment: Anthropological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1710–1808 (Leiden: Vermeulen, 2008).

¹⁹ Nikolaas Witsen, *De Noord en Oost Tartarije* (Amsterdam, 1696).

²⁰ John Ledyard's *Journey through Russia and Siberia 1787–1788: The Journal and Selected Letters*, ed. Stephen Watrous (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 127. Quoted in Larry Wolff, "The Global Perspective of Enlightened Travellers: From Siberia to the Pacific Ocean," *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'Histoire* 13, no. 3 (September 2006): 437–453.

²¹ Edward Gray, "Visions of Another Empire: John Ledyard, an American Traveler across the Russian Empire, 1787–1788," *Journal of the Early Republic* 24, no. 3 (2004): 347–380; Edward Gray, *The Making of John Ledyard: Empire and Ambition in the Life of an Early American Traveler* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

conquerors.²² Yakuts were a distinct, separate people, conquered by the Russians and included in the catalog of imperial populations.²³ In this catalog, Siberian peoples were reimagined as entities with a degree of political and cultural unity.

For the native peoples of Siberia, this new development also meant that their position on the mental map of civilization was now defined by what they did, what kind of tools they used, and how warlike they were.²⁴ While Russia itself was reimagined as an Occidental power, in the increasingly hierarchical and temporal view of civilization, the difference between native peoples of Siberia and the Russians came to signify distance in time from the European pinnacle of development.²⁵ Indeed, in Siberia one could still observe the primitive stone tools of the Yukagir, the clan structure of Yakut society, or even group marriage among the Giliaks of Sakhalin, the discovery of which by Lev Shternberg would substantiate Engels's argument about the evolution of family. Whether a particular people could be defined as "settled" or "nomadic" could now be interpreted as a degree of maturity and usefulness to the state and thus inform the mode of government most suitable for that people.

In the early nineteenth century, most ethnographic accounts of Siberia came from occasional travelers. Thus naval officers conducting expeditions to explore the Arctic coasts or passing through Siberian localities on their way to Russian possessions in America recorded their impressions and included them in their published works. For instance, Ferdinand Wrangell, one of Russia's best-known explorers, left such an account of his trip in 1826. Adolph Erman, a German geographer, left detailed descriptions of some Siberian peoples and helped publicize knowledge about Siberia in German-speaking lands. Most of these accounts strike the contemporary reader by their relative lack of "civilizational arrogance": both Wrangell and Erman noted that some Siberian native peoples did very well economically compared to Russian peasant settlers and stressed the natives' abilities in education and industry.²⁶

²² Ia. I. Lindenau, *Opisanie narodov Sibiri (pervaia polovina XVIII v.)* [Description of the peoples of Siberia (first half of the eighteenth century)] (Magadan, 1983), 21.

²³ Such a catalog was published by Johann Gottlieb Georgi as *Opisanie vsekh v Rosiiskoi mperii obitaiushchikh narodov* (St. Petersburg, 1776).

²⁴ Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*.

²⁵ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

²⁶ For instance, Adolph Erman, *Travels in Siberia: Including Excursions Northwards, down the Obi, to the Polar Circle, and Southwards, to the Chinese Frontier*, vol. 2 (Lon-

By the middle of the nineteenth century, following M.M. Speransky's administrative reforms, Siberian authors begin to enter the scene. They were rarely nobles or aristocrats and reflected the social composition of Siberia's miniscule class of literati: bureaucrats, military officers, priests, and professionals. Perhaps the first significant contribution to the Russian ethnography of Siberia by a Siberian author in the nineteenth century was produced by Prince Nikolai Aleksandrovich Kostrov, a scion of an impoverished noble family who assumed service in Siberian administration after graduating from Moscow University in 1840. In the decades thereafter, Kostrov published several ethnographic studies of Western Siberian peoples, as well as composing a treatise on the common law of Eastern Siberian *inorodtsy*. Informed by a mix of local interest and patriotism and the concerns of a progressive administrator, Kostrov's work, though (unjustly) forgotten, provided the immediate background for the emergence of Siberian regionalist thought and the corresponding interest in Siberian ethnography.²⁷

One particular follower of Kostrov deserves a special place in the history of Siberian regionalism and ethnography. Afanasii Petrovich Shchapov (1831–1876) played a crucial role in marrying emerging Siberian particularism with Russian Populism. He was born to a Russian peasant and a Buryat woman in Anga, along the upper reaches of the Lena River. (Curiously, the little village was also the birthplace of Innokentii Veniaminov, Russia's most important nineteenth-century missionary and

don: Longman, Browns, Green and Longmans, 1848), 280; Ferdinand fon Vranghel', *Puteshestvie po severnym beregam Sibiri i po Ledovitomu moriu, sovershennoe v 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823 i 1824 g. ekspeditsiei, sostoiavsheiu pod nachal'stvom Flota Leitenta Ferdinanda fon Vrangelia* [Journey on the northern shores of Siberia and the Arctic Ocean in 1820–1824 under the command of Fleet Lieutenant von Wrangel] (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. Borodina i Ko, 1841), 165, 170. For a discussion of the "weakness" of the Russian peasant colonist, see Anatolii Remnev and Natalia Suvorova, "'Russkoe delo' na aziatskikh okrainakh: 'russkost' pod ugrozoi ili 'somnitel'nye kulturtregery'" [Russian affairs on Asian fringes. Russianness in danger or dubious *Kulturträger*], *Ab Imperio* 9, no. 2 (2008): 120–163; Willard Sunderland, "Russians into Iakuts? 'Going Native' and Problems of Russian National Identity in the Siberian North, 1870s–1914," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 806–825.

²⁷ See a brief biography and overview of Kostrov's legacy: N. Vasenkin, "Kniaz' Nikolai Alekseevich Kostrov i ego arkhiv v fondakh Nauchnoi biblioteki Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta" [N.A. Kostrov and his archive in the repositories of the scientific library of Tomsk State University], in *Trudy Tomskogo Gosudarstvennogo kraevedcheskogo muzeia* [Works of the Tomsk Provincial Museum] (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo TomGU, 2000), vol. 10, 35–47.

eventually a Metropolitan of Moscow.) Shchapov attended the well-known seminary in Irkutsk (also attended by Veniaminov, and at some point directed by Iakinf [Bichurin], the founder of modern Russian Sinology). He also went to study at the Spiritual Academy in Kazan, where he met several Siberian students, including the future regionalist Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov. In Kazan, then a center of the Russian Orthodox Church's missionary efforts, Shchapov apparently anguished over his "creole" origin and developed a vision of Russian imperial space as defined by ethnic contacts along the "highway" of the Eurasian steppe. In this vision, Russians mixing with natives produced regional variations, and hence the best form of political organization for the empire would be a form of federation of *oblasti* or regions. Despite being the most important forerunner of the Russian federalist tradition, Shchapov believed in a racial hierarchy and considered the European race to be "stronger" than Asian races. While variations resulting from ethnic mixing led to the emergence of regions within the Russian imperial space, the Russian race would ultimately win the battle with the natives in Siberia.²⁸

Shchapov's work, with its focus on the people rather than the state in the colonization of Siberia, as well as his generally democratic views and indisputable Siberian patriotism, proved important to the further development of Siberian regionalism. As was often the case with colonial nationalisms, Siberian regionalism developed out of the encounter between the young "colonial" elite and its experiences in the metropole. In the early 1860s a group of young Siberians, mostly children of mid-ranking Cossack officers, congregated in informal circles in St. Petersburg and discussed the future of their homeland. Prominent among them were Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, and Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov. Quickly discovered by authorities and accused of sedition (after an 1865 incident involving Siberian patriots and progressives from many cities), the young Siberians were subjected to imprisonment and exile—ironically, in some cases, to exile *from* Siberia.²⁹ Yet they continued their work, mostly through research and writing, and came

²⁸ A.P. Shchapov, "Etnograficheskaiia organizatsia russkogo narodonaselenia" [Ethnographic organization of Russian settlement], in *Sochinenia A. P. Shchapova* [Works of A.P. Shchapov], vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: M.V. Pirozhkov, 1906), 365–387; on federalist ideas in Russia, see D. von Mohrenschild, *Toward a United States of Russia: Plans and Projects of Federal Reconstruction of Russia in the Nineteenth Century* (East Brunswick, NJ: Associated University Press, 1981).

²⁹ On the unraveling of the "separatist affair," see Remnev, *Sibir' v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 302–314.

to define the way in which educated and progressive Russians thought about Siberia through the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early years of Soviet rule.³⁰

The emerging Siberian regionalism (*oblastnichestvo*) was a diverse movement with varying interests and programs. Its consensus rested on a sense of Siberian patriotism and indebtedness to one's place of origin, a general progressivism common to the Russian intelligentsia, and—somewhat unusually in Russian history—on the politics of imperial comparisons. Young Siberians believed that Siberia was a colony, and hence to better understand it, one had to look to other imperial experiences. Siberia was discovered, conquered, and settled by the Russians, and thus the best way to understand it was to compare it to similar colonial experiments, for instance, in the British Empire. Iadrintsev in particular believed in the importance of “centralization and decentralization” in colonial history. The politics of comparison was dangerous: British imperial history offered one example with potentially treasonous implications, that of North America. Like North America, Siberia was a settler colony, and history suggested that it was bound to develop separatism and eventually secede. The separatist label was attached to Siberian regionalism, however much Iadrintsev in particular tried to dispel it.³¹

The American parallel had other implications as well. If Europeans on the American continent acquired qualities that separated them from their British brethren, then Russian peasants in Siberia could be expected to follow suit. The regionalists' ethnographic work on Siberian peasantry was driven by the search for difference and for the articulation of the Siberian character. “It is clear,” Iadrintsev argued in his magnum opus, “that in the East a new regional ethnographic type is emerging [...]”³² Due to ethnic intermixing and the peculiarities of the Siberian climate, Siberian

³⁰ On Siberian regionalists, see S. Watrous, “The Regionalist Conception of Siberia, 1860–1920,” in *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*, eds. G. Diment and Y. Slezkine (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), 113–131. The best overall history of the regionalist movement remains Wolfgang Faust, *Russlands goldener Boden: Der sibirische Regionalismus in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* [Russia's golden soil. Siberian regionalism in the second half of the nineteenth century] (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1980).

³¹ N.M. Iadrintsev, “K moei avtobiografii” [On my autobiography], *Russkaia Mysl'* 6 (1904): 152–170.

³² N.M. Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia v geograficheskom, etnograficheskom i istoricheskom ontosheniakh* [Siberia as a colony in geographical, ethnographic, and historical respects], 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg: I.M. Sibiriakov, 1892), 98.

peasants allegedly developed both physical and psychological traits that distinguished them from the Russians. Siberian peasants were less prone to respect social status and easily acquired luxury goods reserved for the upper classes in Russia proper.³³ Siberians, placed in difficult natural circumstances, were less inclined towards mysticism and religiosity. The Siberian population shared with the native population a certain “wilderness,” “lack of historical memory,” and lack of interest in Russian political and public life.³⁴ Siberians were entrepreneurial, although their enterprising spirit was prone to brutality in its drive for material greed. Siberian character “was distinguished from Russian by its inclination towards ‘spatial freedom, liberty, and equality.’”³⁵ Unaware of serfdom, used to the notion of entitlement to natural resources, Siberian peasants gradually became a specific “national-regional type [*narodno-oblastnoi tip*].” In general, Siberian regionalists shared the assumption that “the Siberian peasantry is above the Russian peasantry in terms of its customs and development.”³⁶

However, since the regionalists were broadly in agreement with Russian Populism, they were also inspired by social concerns. At the center of their studies was the peasant commune, this “foundation of the people’s life and economy.”³⁷ The regionalists’ studies attributed the degradation of the population to alcoholism, racial mixing, administrative abuses, the exile of criminals, and, above all, the cultural and intellectual isolation of Siberians and the lack of education. The latter in particular led to the alleged rise of individualism among Siberians and their inability to pursue or articulate social concerns in Siberia.

While Siberia’s parallels with America inspired the ethnographic study of the Russian population, the issue of the non-Russian, native population also grew in importance, as the regionalist movement cast the resettlement question in the context of the larger debate over Siberia’s place in the Russian Empire. The question of the dying out of the Siberian native population was likely raised in the discussions of the Third International Congress of Orientologists in St. Petersburg in 1876. Among the questions the organizers suggested exploring at the Congress was why Siberia was

³³ Ibid., 109–110.

³⁴ Ibid., 106.

³⁵ Ibid., 113.

³⁶ Ibid., 112.

³⁷ “Chto takoe pozemel’naia i sel’skaia obshchina,” *Vostochnoe Obozrenie* 15, no. 2 (April 1882).

the source of so many migrations. Responding to this question in the discussion, the famous Russian Orientologist, V.P. Vasil'ev, argued that Siberia was actually a destination for refugees, not a source of out-migration. In his opinion,

Siberia has never been as densely populated as it is now. One could object that most of its population today is Russian, and that Russians were the indirect cause of the disappearance of other peoples. Yet it seems to me that Russians must be credited for their ability to settle in Siberia in such a way that their population is growing rather than diminishing, as would have been the case with other newcomers. We just heard the communication of Mr. Neuman [K. Neuman, delegate of Eastern Siberia], about the gradual dying out of the Omroki, through no fault of our own. In any case, one should not forget that today the diminishing numbers of Siberian natives can be understood as a result of a significant part of them undergoing Russification, that is, many of them becoming Russian.³⁸

Vasil'ev presented what amounted to a stunningly imperialist view of the native Siberians' situation. It fit well with the politics of imperial comparisons that permeated the Congress, designed in part to showcase Russia's participation in Europe's worldwide imperial expansion, while defending the Russians' record as empire-builders.

The debate at the Congress was noted by the regionalists, who, taking the United States as a paradigmatic example of a colony that split off from its remote metropole, were also concerned that some of the tragic pages of U.S. history not be repeated.³⁹ One terrible outcome of the otherwise celebrated American experience was the fate of the native peoples. Yadrintsev, the spokesman of Siberian regionalists, thought that the main problem concerning the Siberian natives was "the question of preservation of the life of races and of their further existence; this question is connected to the existing phenomenon of their dying out, which is common to all races that are conquered or encounter nationalities more numerous and powerful."⁴⁰ Siberian regionalist scholars criticized the current state of affairs in Siberia and argued that the disorderly and often wasteful colonization of Siberia, combined with "lack of enlightenment," led to the decreasing numbers

³⁸ V.V. Grigor'ev, ed., *Trudy tret'ego mezhdunarodnogo s'ezda orientalistov v S.-Peterburge* [Works of the Third International Meeting of Orientalists in St. Petersburg], vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Brill, 1976), lxxxv–lxxxvii.

³⁹ N.M. Yadrintsev, *Sibirskie inorodtsy. Ikh byt i sovremennoe polozenie* [Siberian indigenous. Their life and contemporary situation] (St. Petersburg: Izdanie I. M. Sibiriakova, 1891), 3.

⁴⁰ Yadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia*, 150–151.

of the native peoples. Russian colonists seized the best lands, deprived the natives of their means of existence, and pushed them away from their habitats: "As in America, where the Indians are pushed to the west, Siberian tribes are pushed to the south and north, and small oases and patches of tribal populations are surrounded by Russians."⁴¹ Yadrintsev considered it an established fact that Siberian *inorodtsy* were dying out.⁴² What, Yadrintsev asked, "if in Siberia the fate of many Australian or American tribes will be repeated?"⁴³

Siberian society was quick to respond to this claim. In 1889, Innokentii Mikhailovich Sibiriakov, a scion of an immensely wealthy Siberian merchant family and a European-educated philanthropist, decided to fund a scholarly expedition to explore the impact of Russian colonization and industrial development in Siberia on the native peoples.⁴⁴ The Sibiriakovs were, perhaps, the most prominent philanthropists in the history of Siberia. They provided funding for A. Nordenskiöld's Arctic expeditions, the first Siberian University in Tomsk, and a number of scholarly works on Siberia in the second half of the nineteenth century, including those by the regionalists. Yet Innokentii Sibiriakov's notion of what had to be done with respect to the native issue was fairly vague, and he was not particularly well informed about the native peoples. For instance, he believed that the Yakuts numbered about 5,000, whereas their real number was above 200,000 in the 1880s.⁴⁵ Sibiriakov's choice of the geographical focus for the future expedition was determined more by the geography of his family's operations. Sibiriakov companies participated in the annual trade on the Lena River and owned shares in gold-mining operations in the south of the Yakut *oblast* and the north of the Irkutsk *guberniia*. Hence, the Yakut *oblast* was selected as a potential venue for the expedition's work.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 162.

⁴² Ibid., p. 157; for the concept of *inorodtsy* in nineteenth-century Russia, see John W. Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy? The Evolution of the Category of 'Aliens' in Imperial Russia," *Russian Review* 57, no. 2 (April 1998): 173–190.

⁴³ Yadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia*, 157.

⁴⁴ Sibiriakov's venture may, in fact, have been a charitable mission to help the impoverished regionalist activist and scholar Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov. See M. Devlet, "A. V. Adrianov kak etnograf" [A.V. Adrianov as ethnographer], in *Repressirovannnye etnografy* [Repressed ethnographers], ed. D.D. Tumarkin (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2002), 9–56. For a popular biography of I.M. Sibiriakov, see T. Shorokhova, *Blagotvoritel' Innokentii Sibiriakov: Biograficheskie povestvovaniia* [Benefactor Innokentii Sibiriakov. Biographical stories] (St. Petersburg, 2006).

⁴⁵ Devlet, "Adrianov kak etnograf," 29.

Sibiriakov initially offered the job of leading and organizing the expedition to G.N. Potanin, one of the most influential Siberian regionalists. When Potanin declined, Sibiriakov contacted another well-known regionalist and scholar of Siberia and Inner Asia, A.V. Adrianov. When Adrianov also declined the offer due to family circumstances, Sibiriakov's initiative was stalled. No scholars in Petersburg or Moscow were particularly interested in studying the native peoples of Siberia, while Siberian cities still lacked universities and research centers where potential participants in the expedition could be found. However, Adrianov suggested to Sibiriakov the candidacy of Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Klements, who then assumed the responsibility of running the Eastern Siberian branch of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society in Irkutsk.

The choice of Klements⁴⁶ as the organizer of the expedition was pivotal. Klements was a political exile who had arrived in Siberia in 1881, following two years of imprisonment in Petersburg after his 1879 arrest. By that time, Klements was a well-known revolutionary activist, a member of the Chaikovskii circle, and an editor of *Zemlia i Volia*, a newspaper of the Populist groups. He counted among his friends practically all leaders of the Russian revolutionary movement from Georgii Plekhanov to Petr Lavrov. When Klements arrived in Siberia (his place of exile was the Yakut *oblast*), he received permission to spend the time of his exile in Minusinsk due to poor health. Klements became involved in the work of the famous Minusinsk Museum, one of the centers of Siberian research, and by 1883 he was taking part in academic expeditions together with Adrianov. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Klements conducted numerous geological, geographic, and ethnographic explorations in southern and Eastern Siberia and Mongolia, earning a reputation as the foremost expert on western Mongolia. Perhaps Klements was the first to set the pattern according to which exiled revolutionaries turned to scholarly exploration of Siberia and transformed themselves into professional scholars. When Klements returned from Siberia, he was appointed the curator of the Ethnographic Department of the Russian Museum of Alexander III.

Klements's crucial significance in organizing the Sibiriakov expedition lay in the fact that he knew the community of exiles intimately. Klements

⁴⁶ For recent studies of Klements's legacy as ethnographer, see I.V. Dubov, ed., *Pigmalion muzeinogo dela v Rossii: k 150-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia D. A. Klementsa* [Pygmalion of the museum affairs. The 150th anniversary of D.A. Klements] (St. Petersburg: Lan', 1997).

met many of the exiles residing in Eastern Siberia well before their exile. In fact, he began establishing contacts with them even before he received Sibriakov's invitation. In 1891–1892, Klements consulted Polish exile Waclaw Sieroszewski on his fundamental ethnographic work *Iakuty: Opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniia* (Sieroszewski collected the materials for this work while in exile in the Yakut *oblast* and wrote the book when he was allowed to reside in Irkutsk).⁴⁷ At approximately the same time, Klements established correspondence with Nikolai Alekseevich Vitashevskii, a Populist exile residing in the Yakut *oblast*, and inquired about the state of “the forces of culture” in the region. In April 1891 Vitashevskii responded to Klements, calling his letter “a ray of light that cut through the surrounding darkness [...]” In his response, Vitashevskii listed the names of potential collaborators in Sibriakov's venture: E.K. Pekarskii, a Polish revolutionary who used his decade-and-a-half-long exile to emerge as the foremost expert on the Yakut language; V.M. Ionov, a Populist exile who married a Yakut woman, M.N. Androsova, and studied native economy and folklore; and, finally, Waclaw Sieroszewski. The latter, Vitashevskii thought, was more interested in using his ethnographic observations in literary work than in scholarship. Vitashevskii also suggested L.G. Levental', a Populist exile who “never missed a chance to mingle with Yakuts and to study their life”; S.V. Iastremskii, a Populist with links to Ukrainophiles who eventually became a prominent Soviet Turkologist; and finally, R.A. Steblin-Kamenskii, who practiced medicine among the Yakuts and, according to Vitashevskii, could assume the responsibility of anthropometric observations.⁴⁸ Klements knew many of these personalities very well. While he was negotiating with Sibriakov about specific parameters of ethnographic work to be completed during the expedition, he started planning a visit to Iakutsk to meet his future collaborators.

The initiative of the Sibriakov expedition came at a particular juncture in the politics of exile in Eastern Siberia. The famous 1889 uprising of the political exiles in Iakutsk (driven by protests against the brutality of the local administration) was violently crushed by the local police, with many protesters killed during the storming of the Monastyrev house. Three more participants in the uprising were executed. The news of the “Iakutsk massacre” reached not only European Russia but Western Europe and the

⁴⁷ Vatslav Seroshevskii, *Iakuty. Opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniia* [Iakuts. Attempt at an ethnographic investigation] (St. Petersburg, 1896).

⁴⁸ Arkhiv SPb otdeleniia Instituta Vostokovedeniia ossiiskoi Akademii Nauk (SPbOIVRAN). F. 28 (Vitashevskii, Nikolai Alekseevich). O. 2. D. 56. ll. 5–6.

United States, where George Kennan widely publicized it.⁴⁹ An international outcry apparently led to a softer policy by the local administrators. The radical exiles even claimed that the new Yakutsk governor, V.N. Skripitsyn (gov. 1892–1903), was sent “to pacify and buy out” the exiles.⁵⁰ As P. Teplov argued, this “capricious liberal fulfilled his mission successfully [...] and utilized political exiles in his “reforming” activities [...]”⁵¹ Nevertheless, Skripitsyn’s administration in Yakutsk took a very cooperative stance with the political exiles who were often permitted to engage in various, sometimes even state-sponsored activities.

In this new atmosphere, energized by the news of the expedition, Vitashevskii, Levental’, Ionov, and Pekarskii began work on the official bulletin of the Yakut region (*Pamiatnaia Knizhka Yakutskoi Oblasti*) for 1893. These pamphlets were supposed to be published by every *guberniia* and *oblast* in the empire and present a statistical overview of the territorial unit. Although officially regional Statistics Committees were responsible for the publication, in practice various police departments often took care of the work. In the case of the Yakut *oblast*, the situation naturally worried the local governor. The Minister of Internal Affairs ordered the production of the pamphlet. Yet it could not be completed without the participation of the exiles. The governor may have hesitated to allow “state criminals” to author a state-sanctioned statistical publication. Vitashevskii approached Klements for support, and a lively correspondence between the Eastern Siberian branch of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society, the governor of the Yakut *oblast*, and the governor-general of Eastern Siberia ensued, as the Yakut administration asked its superiors for permission to involve exiles in the work on the pamphlet.⁵² Quickly, the correspondence was expanded to include the question of permitting them to take part in the Sibiriakov expedition as a whole.⁵³ This work required local travel, whereas exiles were supposed to stay in the Yakut *uluses* (territorial units into which the Yakut *oblast* was divided) where they were assigned.

Finally, the Irkutsk general-governor relented under pressure from the Petersburg and local Eastern Siberian branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society—headed by D.A. Klements—and permitted “state crimi-

⁴⁹ For instance, George Kennan, “The Latest Siberian Tragedy,” *The Century* 39 (November 1889–November 1890): 888–892.

⁵⁰ See P. Teplov, *Istoriia Yakutskogo protesta (delo “romanovtsev”)* [History of the Yakut protest] (St. Petersburg: Glagolev, 1906), 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 11–12.

⁵² See Natsional’nyi Arkhiv Respubliki Sakha (NARS), F. 12. Op. 15. D. 94-1. ll. 44–45.

⁵³ NARS. F. 12. Op. 12. D. 299. l. 16.

nals” to work on the statistical publications of the Yakut *oblast* administration (although their names were not to be printed), as well as in the Sibriakov expedition.⁵⁴ On October 25, 1893, the governor-general of Eastern Siberia, Goremykin, wrote to Iakutsk governor Skripitsyn and communicated to him the conditions under which the exiles were to be permitted their research. This work was to be accomplished under close supervision of the local administration officials, some priests, and veterinarians, who were to become official participants in the expedition. Skripitsyn was to censor their texts before passing them on to the Imperial Geographical Society, while Klements was to report to Goremykin regularly on the course of the expedition. Moreover, Goremykin insisted that work was to be conducted only within the locations where the exiles were settled, and the Iakutsk governor was instructed to forbid any gatherings of exiles under the pretext of scholarly work.⁵⁵ Some exiles, such as F. Ia. Kon, were not allowed to work for Sibriakov, with no explanations given.⁵⁶ Goremykin officially allowed only Vitashevskii, Levental', Pekarskii, Iastemskii, Iokhel'son, Bogoraz, and Ionov to take part in the expedition. From that moment on, the police files on the participants grew very fast: bureaucratic correspondence included reports from *naslegi* elders where exiles worked, notes from police officers in the *okrugs*, petitions by members of the expedition to allow them to travel to specific locations, and so on. Few scholarly expeditions were ever policed as thoroughly by state authorities and yet produced accounts of their subjects so unfavorable for the authorities.

In the winter of 1894, the Sibriakov expedition finally took shape. Klements visited Iakutsk and met with most of the expedition's members. He delivered a public lecture on the importance of its work and met with the expedition's members, who now included V.F. Troshchanskii, V.G. Bogoraz, and V.I. Iokhel'son. In fact, the expedition's original goals were transformed in the process of its organization, and the expedition itself became an umbrella and a source of funding for a remarkable group of amateur ethnographers-exiles. It also became a turning point in the lives of some of its participants: Pekarskii, Bogoraz, Iastemskii, and Iokhel'son embarked on new careers as scholars, moving away from their revolutionary pasts. As for other participants, L.G. Levental's academic career did not materialize, despite his high-quality historical work. Levental' returned to

⁵⁴ NARS. F. 12. Op. 12. D. 299. ll. 16.

⁵⁵ NARS. F. 12. Op. 12. D. 299. ll. 17–18.

⁵⁶ V.N. Ivanov, *Narody Sibiri v trudakh F. Ia. Kona* [Peoples of Siberia in the works of F. Ia. Kon] (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1985), 27.

Ukraine after his exile, where he worked as a statistician in a Poltava *zemstvo*. He died in 1918. Similarly, V.F. Troshchanskii, whose work was highly praised by Katanov, died in 1898 before his sentence in exile expired. N.A. Vitashevskii, most of whose work would reach the public only in 1925, died in 1922, when he had just embarked on a career as a consultant of the Academy of Sciences on Siberian ethnography.

The work of another exile, Feliks Kon, was a special case. Kon was a Polish socialist of Jewish origin and a relatively recent arrival in the Yakut *oblast*. I.I. Mainov, officially included in the expedition, interceded with the authorities on behalf of Kon. The authorities, however, categorically refused Kon permission to participate in the expedition's work. As a result, Kon worked independently, apparently with no funding from Sibiriaikov. His work focused on physical anthropology and consisted of skull measurements and body-type descriptions. In this, Kon cooperated with N. Gekker, whose work was officially sanctioned by the authorities. Gekker produced an interesting study of the racial composition of the Yakuts, which relied on Kon's materials. In his study, Gekker utilized the conception of the "mixed type," which, as Marina Mogilner showed, was a central element in the apparatus of Russian racial anthropology.⁵⁷

The expedition's scholarly character was defined by the interests of the participants, who completely forgot the original plans of the funder. Most of the work of the expedition can be classified according to several major clusters. The socioeconomic one focused on the contemporary state of the Yakut economy, land use, the emergence of and contemporary developments in Yakut social organization, and the historical development of legislation regarding native Siberian peoples. In particular, V.M. Ionov, E.K. Pekarskii, N.A. Vitashevskii, and L.G. Levental' pursued this work. Their contributions serve as the basis for Yakut social history and a major source on Siberian history to this day. The second cluster, linguistic and anthropological, was pursued by Pekarskii, Iastremskii, Iokhel'son, Bogoraz, and Troshchanskii. The results of their work were equally impressive: Pekarskii's dictionary of the Yakut language remains the best dictionary to

⁵⁷ N.L. Gekker, "K kharakteristike fizicheskogo tipa iakutov (Antropologicheskii ocherk)" [On the characteristics of the physical type of the Yakuts (anthropological outline)], in *Zapiski Vostochno-Sibirskogo otdela Imperatorskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva po etnografii* [Sketches on ethnography of the Eastern Siberian section of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society], vol. 3 (Irkutsk, 1896); M. Mogilner, *Homo imperii: Istoriia fizicheskoi antropologii v Rossii (XIX–nachalo XX veka)* [Homo imperii. History of physical anthropology in Russia (nineteenth and early twentieth century)] (Moscow: NLO, 2007).

this day, while Iastremskii's work on grammar earned the author a laudatory review by Vsevolod Miller. Bogoraz and Iokhel'son's work on the Iukagirs and the Chukchi not only expanded contemporary knowledge on these peoples but also transformed these two revolutionaries into Russia's leading ethnographers.

One striking feature of the Sibiriakov expedition's academic work was its focus on Spenserian evolutionism.⁵⁸ Vitashevskii tellingly titled his work on Yakut social history *Yakut materials for the elaboration of an embryology of law*, suggesting that his studies of late-nineteenth-century Yakut common law provide an insight into the emergence of law systems in modern Europe.⁵⁹ Similarly, Troshchanskii's work on shamanism and Levental's work on Yakut clan and *ulus* organization betrayed an unshakable belief in the notion of evolutionary development of human societies. Evolutionism provided exiles-turned-ethnographers with an explanatory model that also allowed them to realize the social critique inherent in their work and in their lives.

The Sibiriakov venture was the most impressive stationary expedition of late imperial Russia. Its role was not limited to its dramatic impact on the lives of its participants or to its accumulation of knowledge about one of the most forgotten parts of the enormous Russian Empire. In a twist peculiar to the imperial situation, the expedition also became a school for the native intelligentsia. Vera Tolz recently noted how Petersburg Orientologists, the followers of Baron Rozen, maintained connections to representatives of the empire's minorities and encouraged their participation in scholarly work.⁶⁰ Such an approach was clearly not limited to the St. Petersburg Orientologists: revolutionary exiles in Siberia established the practice a decade earlier and saw it as their duty to "awaken" the "cultural forces" of Siberian peoples. Already in 1890, the informal leader of the

⁵⁸ For an overview of the reception of evolutionism in Russia, see Alexander Vucinich, *Darwin in Russian Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); also Daniel P. Todds, *Darwin without Malthus: The Struggle for Existence in Russian Evolutionary Thought* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1989); on evolutionism in Russian ethnographic museums, see Sergei Kan, "Evolutionism and Historical Particularism at the St. Petersburg Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography," *Museum Anthropology* 31, no. 1 (2008): 28–46. On the role of evolutionary ethnography in the making of the Soviet nationalities policies, see Hirsch, *The Empire of Nations*.

⁵⁹ N.A. Vitashevskii, "Iakutskie materialy dlia razrabotki embriologii prava" [Iakut materials for the elaboration of an embryology of law], in *Materialy po obychnomu i obshchestvennomu bytu iakutov* [Materials on common and social life of the Iakuts] (Leningrad, 1929), pp. 89–220.

⁶⁰ Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, 111–133.

Sibiriakov expedition, D.A. Klements, spoke at the meeting of the Eastern Siberian branch of the Imperial Geographical Society about the need to recruit native participants for scholarly ventures. As the Siberian regionalist mouthpiece, the newspaper *Vostochnoe Obozrenie*, reported, Klements, who was to embark upon the ethnographic exploration of Trans-Baikal Buryats, “spoke with great sympathy and compassion about those collaborators of the department for the study of the Buryats who are Buryats themselves. Finding new such collaborators and maintaining ties with old ones will be the best way to accomplish his expedition’s goals.”⁶¹ Among the Sibiriakov expedition’s participants—whose contributions are not often acknowledged—were a number of young Yakut men. Among native participants, most of whom worked with Ionov, Iastremskii, and Pekarskii, the figure of V.V. Nikiforov stood out. Nikiforov was a typical member of the Yakut Russian-educated elite referred to as *kul’turnyi inorodets*, a son of an *ulus* secretary of moderate wealth. He became a student in the private school of N.P. Stranden, an exile of the Karakozov group, where he received preparation to enter the Iakutsk *pro-gymnasium* (a school that prepared for a gymnasium course). Involved in the work of Pekarskii’s expedition, Nikiforov composed a program for the study of shamanism among the Yakuts, gathered a collection of artifacts, and conducted surveys of Yakut households to study their economic conditions. He also recorded Yakut historical tales, some of which were used by Troshchanskii and Iastremskii.⁶²

While Nikiforov never acquired the scholarly standing of the exiles, his participation in the expedition was of crucial importance for his future career. Socializing with revolutionary exiles and Populists, Nikiforov absorbed important notions of the intelligentsia. When the expedition’s work ended, he became the leading figure in the small but vocal group of Yakut professionals who saw their task in bringing democratic institutions such as *zemstvo* to the Siberian native periphery. For a brief period, Nikiforov served as head of the Diupsinskii *ulus*. During the 1905 revolution, Nikiforov organized the first Yakut political party, the Union of Yakuts, and continued his political work despite a year-long imprisonment in the wake of the Union’s dissolution. Throughout the years before the Russian revolutions, he remained the key figure among the fledgling Yakut

⁶¹ “V geograficheskome obshchestve,” *Vostochnoe Obozrenie*, 1890, no. 23 (June 10).

⁶² About him, see *V. V. Nikiforov-Kulumnuur, fotografii i dokumenty* [V.V. Nikiforov-Kulumnuur, photographs and documents] (Iakutsk: Bichik, 2006); *V. V. Nikiforov-Kulumnuur—Chelovek i lichnost’* [V.V. Nikiforov-Kulumnuur. Man and personality] (Iakutsk: Bichik, 1997).

intelligentsia. It should not be surprising that he was *de facto* sole organizer of the Aliens' Congresses (*inorodcheskie s'ezdy*), which became the venue for open discussions of the government resettlement policies and other concerns of native communities between 1907 and 1912.⁶³ During the Civil War, Nikiforov became the *oblast's* deputy at the Siberian Duma and the main spokesman on behalf of the native population of the Yakut *oblast*. Nikiforov was by far the most important figure in the political mobilization of the native population in the Yakut *oblast* in the early twentieth century. He achieved this due to the impact of political exile—and of the exiles' ethnographic interests—on the emergence of modern forms of political activism in Siberia among the native peoples.

Between 1905 and 1917, Nikiforov was engaged in attempts to carve out more space for native political participation. Under the imperial regime the *zemstvo* was not introduced in the Yakut *oblast*, and the elections of the deputy to the imperial Duma were quickly abolished after the first deputy was elected. Nikiforov had no doubt that, given the demographic situation in the *oblast*, the deputy to the Duma would represent the Yakuts and that the *zemstvo*, once established, would be dominated by the Yakuts. In the meantime, he concentrated on propagating notions of Yakut national unity, publishing in the Yakut-language press oral histories about the legendary Yakut warlord Tygyn that he collected during his work with the expedition.

In 1894, when the expedition's work had just begun, D.A. Klements left Irkutsk for his own expedition in Mongolia. Shortly thereafter, Innokentii Sibiriakov had a psychological crisis and became a monk, as his relatives attempted to restrict his ability to dispose of his property. By late 1896, funding for the expedition dried up. Some of the works by the expedition members were published, but most remained scattered in various archives the form of manuscripts and notes. In the years that followed, texts would appear in academic publications from time to time, but major works remained unknown to the broader public until the 1920s, when they were issued through the publications of the Commission for the Study of the Yakut Republic (*Komissiiia po izucheniiu Iakutskoi Respubliki*) of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.⁶⁴

⁶³ S.I. Kovlekov, *V. V. Nikiforov i s'ezd iakutov 1912 g.* [V.V. Nikiforov and the meeting of the Iakuts, 1912] (Iakutsk: Akademiia nauk respubliki Sacha, Institut gumanitarnykh issledovaniï, 1996).

⁶⁴ For instance, D.M. Pavlinov et al., eds., *Materialy po obychnomu pravu i obshchestvennomu stroiu iakutov* [Materials on common law and social organization of the Iakuts] (Leningrad: Akademiia nauk, 1929).

Although almost contemporaneous with the Sibiriakov expedition, the work of Waclaw Sieroszewski (Vatslav Leopoldovich Seroshevskii, pen name Sirko) stood somewhat apart from the pursuits of the scholars described above, although Sieroszewski knew them well and even shared a house with Vitashevskii. Sieroszewski arrived in the Yakut *oblast* in 1882, among the first political exiles, following a stormy beginning of his revolutionary career. He left the Yakut *oblast* in 1892, before the expedition gathered momentum—and when he was already writing his own major ethnographic study. This work was published through funding from the merchant house of the Gromovs, wealthy entrepreneurs operating along the Lena from Irkutsk.⁶⁵ In other respects, too, Sieroszewski differed from the participants in the Sibiriakov venture. Although Sieroszewski socialized in the broader circles of revolutionary exiles, he was clearly a Polish national democrat by political convictions. Moreover, uniquely among the exiles, he earned not just a reputation but also an income by transforming his exile experiences into a series of exoticizing literary texts on the Siberian “savages.”⁶⁶ These were published widely both in Polish and Russian and were quickly translated into German, French, and English. Between 1902 and 1909, four editions of Sieroszewski’s collected works were published, along with a stream of publications in the newspapers and “thick journals.”⁶⁷ Writing under the pseudonym “Sirko,” Sieroszewski emerged as perhaps the most important writer whose prose drew on the native Siberian experiences. His novellas and stories offered a remarkable portrait of a European exile in the midst of a savage, utterly unfamiliar, and destitute human and natural landscape.

In the story “In the Nets,” for example, such an exile, Alexander, is introduced as he meets with his wife and little daughter, who have arrived from European Russia to join him in exile. Alexander’s wife dies from tuberculosis, and he is left alone with his daughter. Alexander struggles with his position as a parasite living on the charity of the Yakuts. He attempts to acquire land from the Yakut commune, but the Yakuts categorically reject his request. They argue that, though Russians settle alone, their settlements grow, and their cultivation of land prevents Yakut cattle

⁶⁵ Gromovs employed Sieroszewski’s revolutionary friend, Stanislas Landy, whose family later became a foster family for Sieroszewski’s daughter, Maria.

⁶⁶ Only V.G. Tan-Bogoraz developed something of a literary career, but it was not in the same league as Sieroszewski, with his multiple editions of collected writings.

⁶⁷ Some of these literary works first appeared in *Sibirskii Vestnik*, an almanac for the subscribers to *Vostochnoe Obozrenie*, the regionalist newspaper based in Irkutsk and edited by N.M. Iadrintsev.

from roaming freely. "You live by bread, we by cattle," a Yakut princeling tells Alexander. As the exile illegally ploughs the Yakuts' land, his conflict with the commune grows bitter. Yakuts damage his fields, tear apart his nets, and let his little canoe float down the river. Hungry, lonely, and exhausted, and fearful for his daughter's fate, Alexander is faced with two choices: to go and ask for help from the exploitative Yakut princeling, or to die. As his daughter gets sick, Alexander undertakes a heroic feat. He carries his sick daughter, under the burning sun of Siberia's short, hot summer, for seventy miles to the nearest settlement, barely surviving the journey. As he arrives there, he learns that he has been freed and can go home, leaving behind the Siberian heart of darkness.⁶⁸

Sieroszewski's romantic story is strikingly autobiographic, but in a strange and inverted manner.⁶⁹ Almost as soon as he arrived in the Yakut *oblast* (during the second year of his exile), in Verkhoiansk, he married a Yakut woman. Such temporary "colonial" marriages were fairly common among revolutionary exiles, some of whom had families in European Russia. It should be noted that informal marriages were also common among revolutionaries in Russia. Sieroszewski had a daughter from his colonial marriage. When his daughter was just three months old, he attempted his first escape via the Lena River (he and his partner hoped to board an American mercantile ship visiting the northern Russian shores). Sieroszewski's colonial family was, of course, left behind. Sieroszewski's party was soon captured off the Arctic coast, and he was exiled to one of the most remote locations of the Yakut *oblast*, in the Kolyma River region. In 1887 he moved to the central part of the Yakut *oblast*, and when his wife died in the winter of the same year, he placed the daughter with his wife's relatives and later with a family of revolutionary exiles named Landy, in Irkutsk. After another decade of life in Siberia (a trained mechanic, Sieroszewski made a living as a smith), he went to Irkutsk, where he wrote his ethnographic *magnum opus* on the Yakuts, enriched by immense and detailed knowledge of the language and everyday life of the Siberian natives. Although he later corresponded with his daughter, who moved to Moscow with the Landy family, he never reunited with her.

Similarly, Sieroszewski's invocation of economic conflicts with the Yakut communities was not imaginary. One of the revolutionary exiles' greatest challenges was how to establish themselves in their new sur-

⁶⁸ V. Seroshevskii, *V setiakh* [In the nets] (St. Petersburg: Izdanie N. Popovoi, 1898).

⁶⁹ The following information is based on the personal file of W. Sieroszewski by the imperial police in NARS. F. 12i. Op. 15. D. 35.

roundings as economically independent individuals. In this, they were transformed into involuntary settler colonists. Driven by the Populist celebration of peasant labor, exiles petitioned Yakut communes to provide them with land allotments so that they could maintain themselves independently. These demands left Yakuts bewildered: after all, the government provided small monetary payments to sustain the exiles, and the administration expected Yakut communities to provide them with food and shelter. Yakuts often feared the expansion of exile settlements and defended their lands from what they probably saw as encroachment. These struggles for land were fought through petitions to police departments, which moved slowly and sometimes took years to be resolved. These conflicts inevitably contributed to the convoluted relationship between native communities and exiles.

Colonial ethnography, it is sometimes argued, ascribed European notions of “tradition” and “custom” to native populations in an attempt to legitimize rationalizing administration by Europeans.⁷⁰ Sieroszewski certainly shared in that ethnographic mode of description. His ethnographic study of the Yakuts paid close attention to the dynamic of the clan in Yakut life, as well as to the customary law, which Sieroszewski saw as capable of shedding light on the development of European customary laws. Famous Russian sociologist and ethnographer Maksim Kovalevsky, who saw the task of Russian imperial ethnography as contributing to the worldwide expansion of the European catalog of diversity in order to elaborate a universal view of evolution, cited Sieroszewski’s exploration of the clan atavisms among the Yakuts.⁷¹ Much in line with Kovalevsky’s argument, Sieroszewski saw the perpetuation of Yakut clans—largely based on imagined common descent—as a reflection of economic necessity, a matter of survival in the North’s harsh environment. Kovalevsky

⁷⁰ See, for example, Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 149–172.

⁷¹ M. Kovalevsky, “Le clan chez les tribus indigènes de la Russie,” *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, no. 2 (1905): 6–101. On Kovalevsky, see D.N. Anuchin, “Pamiati Maksima Maksimovicha Kovalevskogo” [In memoriam M.M. Kovalevskii], *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie*, no. 102 (1916): 1–16; N.S. Timasheff, “The Sociological Theories of Maksim M. Kovalevsky,” in *An Introduction to the History of Sociology*, ed. H.E. Barnes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 441–457; A. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought From the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 367–369; E. Badredinov, “Problems of Modernization in Late Imperial Russia: Maksim M. Kovalevskii on Social and Economic Reform” (Louisiana State University; PhD dissertation, 2006).

saw evolution from clan to state forms as a universal phenomenon, while he also defended a political organization of the Russian imperial space in accordance with the alleged stages of development of each particular people. On a number of occasions, Kovalevsky's views were challenged by Russian ethnographers.⁷²

Very much in accordance with the temporal ladder envisioned by Kovalevsky's theories, Sieroszewski discerned the "irrationality" of native traditions and customs. For instance, in his novella "In the Nets" he described how a Yakut commune collectively murdered a group of exiled Tatars, criminals who repeatedly robbed the Yakuts. When the Russian colonial official arrives and arrests several Yakuts who participated in the murder, the Yakuts make what looks like a ridiculous move: from among them emerges a poor, blind old man, who claims he is the sole murderer. The whole commune promises to corroborate his story and begs the administrator to arrest the old man and release the young, able-bodied murderers. The administrator quickly catches on to the ruse, and the Yakut princeling "grudgingly admitted: I told them it won't work [...]." Of course, for the Yakuts, who are faced with the often incomprehensible workings of tsarist colonial administration ("we don't write laws—you, Russians, do," they often say to Alexander in Sieroszewski's novel), the move is rational. If someone has to be arrested, let it be an old man who will die soon, not the young men on whose labor many families depend.

Still, there is a stunning disconnect in Sieroszewski's scenario of a European rational colonizer in the midst of irrational savages. Not only is he closer to the Yakuts than may be apparent from his writings: he shares their material world, he lives in a Yakut-style house, he eats Yakut food, and he marries a Yakut woman. He is also an object of the same administrative supervision and intrusion that is applied to the Yakut societies. In a strange reversal, as Sieroszewski collected his observations on Yakut customary laws and described "typical female bodies," the imperial police compiled a medical file on the exile, which contained detailed information on his diseases (including syphilis, likely procured in the North, where it was widespread) and measurements of Sieroszewski's own skull.⁷³

⁷² See Marina Mogilner, "Russian Physical Anthropology in Search of 'Imperial Race': Liberalism and Modern Scientific Imagination in the Imperial Situation," *Ab Imperio* 8, no. 1 (2007): 213–214.

⁷³ "Meditisinskoe svidetel'stvo Vatslava Seroshevskogo. 19 iunia 1884 g. G. Srednekolym'sk," in NARS. F. 12i. Op. 15. D. 35. L. 162.

Sieroszewski's personal and scholarly trajectories are difficult to place within the narrow confines of Romantic Polish nationalism, Russian revolutionary and democratic tradition, or European imperialist evolutionism. All of these traits were present in his writings, and each of them was challenged by his experiences. Sieroszewski's personal self-identification remained wrought by differing allegiances. As he returned from Siberian exile—where, of course, the native people saw him as “Russian”—he complained how unsatisfying his homecoming was: “In Russia, I am not a Russian; in Poland, I am not a Pole.”⁷⁴ Although Sieroszewski proudly claimed to be able to think and write in two languages, in reality, his Russian-language prose required heavy editing, and indeed, his manuscripts were sometimes rejected for this reason. Nevertheless, Sieroszewski found his literary milieu among Russian democratic realists—Korolenko and Gorky in particular—and their journals were the main market for his writings. Not unlike the Habsburg dilemma of Bronisław Malinowski, Sieroszewski's dilemma was between the imperial universalism of a European cosmopolitan and the nationalist and Populist concerns of a Polish democrat and Russian *narodnik*.⁷⁵ Paradoxically, it allowed for an ethnographic perspective that simultaneously stressed the natives' backwardness and savagery and sympathized with their plight and expressed concerns for their social and economic development—and all without access to the political or administrative power of the colonial administration. Sieroszewski's stance towards the imperial authorities remained unambiguously critical. Perhaps reflecting on his dilemmas and seeking a firmer ground for his stance, Sieroszewski himself complained of his imperial situation and sought a grander scale of belonging: “Native nature is charming. And yet I am sad, and I am sad in Russia as well, and elsewhere, where I encounter prejudices, social ills, international and personal injustice, which make life difficult. Yes, now I really feel that I am a citizen of the world [...] of Polish extraction.”⁷⁶

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⁷⁴ L.I. Rovniakova, “Vatslav Seroshevskii i ego russkie korrespondenty” [V. Sieroszewski and his Russian correspondents], in *Slavianskie literaturnye svyazi*, ed. M. Alekseev (Leningrad: Nauka, 1968), 135.

⁷⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁷⁶ Rovniakova, “Vatslav Seroshevskii,” 136.

Several instances of ethnographic work in Siberia that we discussed so far confirm our preliminary hypothesis. In all these cases, the producers of ethnographic knowledge could not simply and unequivocally identify themselves with the center of political power in the Russian Empire. German scholars of the eighteenth century subscribed to a rationalist and cameralist view of human societies. Although they saw native Siberian people as wild and in need of supervision, they also considered Russia itself to be a backward society. Both Russians and Siberian natives were to be enlightened, and their difference was one of degree, not of kind. Young Siberian Russians, who developed the regionalist movement in the mid-nineteenth century, were opposed to the imperial regime (even if they did not necessarily share in the separatist ideas ascribed to them). Their politics of comparison brought into the picture the American experience, which they treated as paradigmatic and against which they measured the plight of Siberian natives. This measurement came along with a good deal of criticism of Russian settlement and colonization, let alone the imperial bureaucracy. The exiles of the late nineteenth century—Populists and socialists—produced sympathetic accounts of Siberian natives and often helped crystallize their political mobilization. Tellingly, Waclaw Sieroszewski, whose work in some remarkable ways mirrored Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, failed to perform the role of the European romantic in the savage land exactly because his own position vis-à-vis the political power and his own national identifications were complicated by the imperial situation. What, then, does the case of Siberian ethnography tell us about the late-nineteenth-century Russian Empire? It seems to me that it raises an important question about imperial subjects and subjectivities, as it clearly illustrates the gap between political power and the production of knowledge about human diversity, a gap that historians of colonial ethnography tend to overlook.

Concepts of Ukrainian Folklore and the Transition from Imperial Russia to Stalin's Soviet Empire

Angela Rustemeyer

Defined as “the people’s activity”, often with a focus on non-material culture,¹ Ukrainian folklore has been the major object of Ukrainian ethnography as a branch of scientific research. It has also been in the focus of national identity-building in the Russian Empire, in Soviet Ukraine, and with Ukrainian communities abroad. This is not necessarily a contradiction. Folklore studies were not ideologically neutral. They could promote the uses of folklore for the purpose of identity-building. From this point of view, I would like to discuss Ukrainian folklore studies as the core of Ukrainian ethnography in the transition from late imperial Russia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and then to Stalinism. As to ethnographic knowledge on the peoples of the Russian empire and the early Soviet Union in general, this transition has been convincingly described by Francine Hirsch.² However, the specific topic of Ukrainian folklore studies have

¹ The Ukrainian expression for folklore is *narodna tvornist'*. In Ukrainian research, folklore is often understood as oral literature: Bohdan Medwidsky, “Folklore,” in *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, eds. V. Kubyovych and D. Husar Struk, vol. 1 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1984): 909 (available at <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\F\O\Folklore.htm> [April 1, 2013]). The song texts and stories studied in this article fit this definition. However, Oleksandr Andrievs'kyi's bibliography of Ukrainian folklore, which I rely on heavily, also includes works on food and dwelling, while concentrating on immaterial culture: Oleksandr Andrievs'kyi, *Bibliohrafiia literatury z ukrains'koho folkl'oru. 1. Materialy do istorii ukrains'koi ethnohrafii* [Bibliography of Ukrainian folklore. 1: Materials relating to the history of Ukrainian ethnography], ed. Andriy Loboda (Kyiv: Vseukrains'ka Akademiia Nauk, 1930).

² Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2005). Concerning Ukraine, Hirsch concentrates on the impact of ethnographic knowledge on the official listing of

not yet generated much interest among historians. Nor have historians much dealt with Ukrainian folklore as such. One of the rare examples of Ukrainian folklore analyzed from a point of view familiar to historians hints at an aspect that will also be a key point in this article on folklore studies. Dealing with the various approaches to religious fiction in the “letters from heaven” that circulated in late nineteenth-century Ukraine, Andriy Zayarnyuk has demonstrated that be they nationalists, liberals, or socialists, any modernizers’ time concepts tended to collide with the traditional time concepts they found among “the people.”³ Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century ethnographers were intellectually affected by modernization, even if they opposed its aims and means. How did ethnographers dealing with Ukrainian folklore consider (or construct) archaic popular concepts of time reflected in the texts and customs they studied?

Interest in ethnographers’ ideas about time concepts in Ukrainian folklore is naturally accompanied by interest in ethnographers’ approach to space. How did ethnographers studying folklore consider Ukraine’s complex spatial situation and its influence on folklore? Ukraine was a vast territory, and Ukrainians had been a major part of the Russian Empire’s population since the mid-seventeenth century. But there were also smaller territorial units defined as Ukrainian, which ethnography described as places where custom was dense, or otherwise as examples of a quick transition from backwardness to modernity, like the Carpathian Ukraine. When dealing with subjects within the frame of the Russian Empire, as often as not ethnographers referred not to “Ukraine” but to historical landscapes like the territory of the historical Hetmanate (*hetmanshchyna*) or Sloboda Ukraine (*slobozhanshchyna*),⁴ territorial references that could stand for both Ukrainian national territorial claims and the Russian Em-

Ukraine’s nationalities (136), on the representation of Ukrainians in censuses and on the discussion about the borders of Ukraine within the Soviet state (155-160) and on the political interpretation of the differences between the Western and the Eastern Parts of Ukraine (76). She also discusses the 1931 Ukraine exhibit in Leningrad and popular reactions to it (209-213).

³ Andriy Zayarnyuk, “Letters from Heaven: An Encounter between the ‘National Movement’ and ‘Popular Culture,’” in *Letters from Heaven: Popular Religion in Russia and Ukraine*, eds. John-Paul Himka and Andriy Zayarnyuk (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 165–200, especially 190.

⁴ Petro Odarchenko, “Naukova diial’nist’ Mykhaila Drahomanova” [The scholarly activity of Mykhailo Drahomanov], *Suchasnist’*, no. 7–8 (1978): 84–99, especially 88 on Drahomanov’s “Political Songs of the Ukrainian People in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” vol. 1: *Zaporizhzhia* [Zaporizhian Sich], vol. 2: *Getmanshchyna i Slobozhanshchyna* [Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine].

pire's claim of control. The separation of Eastern and Western Ukraine by state borders (between the Russian and the Hapsburg empires, later between the Soviet Union and Poland) was a territorial condition that made cultural unity in spite of political division an object of ethnographic interest. Moreover, territorial division provided for the location of the centers of ethnographic research on Ukrainians in different countries, with pre-World War I ethnographers in the Russian and the Austrian part of Ukraine as well as post-World War I ethnographers in the Soviet Union and Poland working under different conditions and in different ideological contexts. That is beyond the scope of this article. Ethnography in Western Ukraine is a topic for a separate study.⁵ However, we shall return to the branches of Ukrainian ethnography in (future) Poland in the conclusion.

While divided between multinational states, Ukraine was itself a territory with a multinational population. So the ethnography of the Ukrainians was not the ethnography of Ukraine. Ukraine was inhabited by nationalities who, in the course of their formation (or construction), developed scientific approaches to their own composition, not exclusively referring to their people living in Ukraine, but also to those living elsewhere. The most prominent example is the Jews. Jewish ethnography in the period under consideration inscribed itself into the transnational context of *yidische visnshaft*. At the same time, dealing, for instance, with the *shtetl*, the "Jewish sciences" treated an ethnographically important social formation on Ukrainian territory.⁶ For all its importance, the "implicit" ethnography of Ukraine written within the frame of ethnographic writing on non-Ukrainians cannot be treated here.

So what is this article about? Its focus on modernization has been mentioned above. Modernizers' concern with the heterogeneity of time concepts and spatial conditions partially overlapped with their interest in the relation between class and nation. This was reflected in folklore studies. Folklore as a form of memorizing the past and describing the present was

⁵ This applies particularly during the interwar years, when the center of that discipline, the Western Ukrainian metropolis L'viv was shaken by social and national upheaval. As far as I know, ethnography in that period and place has not yet been treated in any special study. Christoph Mick hints only at the political pressure to mark monuments of Ukrainian culture: Christoph Mick, "Die 'Ukrainermacher' und ihre Konkurrenten. Strategien der nationalen Vereinnahmung des Landes in Ostgalizien," in *"Arbeit am nationalen Raum."* *Deutsche und polnische Rand- und Grenzregionen im Nationalisierungsprozess*, eds. Peter Haslinger and Daniel Mollenhauer (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2005), 60–67.

⁶ Deborah Yalen, "On the Social-Economic Front: The Polemics of Shtetl Research during the Stalin Revolution," *Science in Context* 20, no. 2 (June 2007): 239–301.

not necessarily dependent on concrete places, but it could manifest itself in places. The question discussed on the following pages is how ethnographers' concepts of folklore and political concepts of place, nation, and class were interrelated. This is of particular interest concerning the latest period covered in this article, the late 1920s and 1930s, when the engineering of popular traditions and the issue of class identity met under conditions of enforced change. Many of the sources for this article stem from the media of Ukrainian ethnography as an academic discipline, which was established in the late nineteenth century.⁷ I also deal with sources from non-academic surroundings, but which ethnographers nevertheless considered ethnographic works on Ukrainians. These are, for instance, mid-nineteenth-century texts written by Orthodox Russian priests in Right Bank Ukraine, which had recently been annexed by the Russian Empire. On the following pages I first briefly describe the tendencies in research on the history of Ukrainian ethnography, which has been heavily influenced by various ideologies and a common inclination towards personalization. Turning to concepts of folklore and their political meaning as produced by late imperial and early Soviet Ukrainian ethnography, I would like to suggest an approach to the history of this branch of knowledge that goes beyond the description of important ethnographers' personal and scientific fates.

The Historiography of Ukrainian Ethnography

Works dealing with the history of Ukrainian ethnography generally fall into one of two approaches. The first is the Soviet view on the history of Ukrainian ethnography; the other is the Ukrainian national perspective. In spite of the two seemingly opposite viewpoints, these approaches are, in a way, similar.

Ethnography Meeting Historical Materialism

A Soviet history of Ukrainian ethnography was written following the 300th anniversary of Left Bank Ukraine's integration into Muscovy and under the continuing influence of the Thaw, which began in 1953. This

⁷ Petro Odarchenko, "Ethnography," in *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, eds. Volodymyr Kubiyovych and Danylo Husar Struk, vol. 1 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 839–842.

setting greatly conditioned the content of the work. The influence of the Thaw made sure that the author would refrain from criticizing Ukrainian ethnographic research of the 1920s, a period in the history of the discipline that the official Stalinist position had discredited as marked by “bourgeois” influence and “deviation” from the doctrine of evolutionism.⁸ This study of the history of Ukrainian ethnography instead criticized the Stalinist “deviation” at the very end of the 1920s, respectively, the beginning of the following decade: the author did not fail to mention that Ukrainian ethnography had been drawn into the cult of Stalin.⁹

Still, the text mirrors the author’s effort to meet the official image of historical Russian-Ukrainian relations. This image was rather complex. For instance, on the one hand, according to the official Soviet version the Ukrainians integrated themselves into Muscovy in the mid-seventeenth century voluntarily. On the other hand, the teleological concept of this integration (*prisoedenenie*), which declared the unification of Russians and Ukrainians a natural, progressive, and thus inevitable step in historical development, demanded a corresponding argument. The author was also obligated to follow official guidelines in a more general way: the essentials of historical materialism were required in the historiography of ethnographic research, just as they were required in any other branch of historiography.

The author tackled these partially contradictory demands in a way that makes his text more valuable as a document of Soviet intellectual history in the 1960s than as a source of information on the topic as such. As many Ukrainian ethnographers unquestionably identified with the Ukrainian national movement in the late imperial period (and thus with positions hardly compatible with the 1960 Soviet axioms of Russian-Ukrainian relations), the author prudently limited his research to the period before then, ending in 1860. He also deliberately excluded ethnographic studies on Ukrainians carried out beyond the borders of the Russian Empire. However, he does mention some ethnographers both from the second half of the nineteenth century (respectively the early twentieth century) and from Galicia.¹⁰ At times the author simply refuses to resolve the paradox

⁸ “Etnografiia” [Ethnography], in *Bol’shaia Sovetskaia Enciklopediia* [Great Soviet Encyclopedia], ed. B.A. Vedenskii (Moscow: Bol’shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1957): 49.

⁹ Vladimir Fedorovich Horlenko, *Narysy s istorii ukrainskoï etnografii ta rosiis’ko-ukrains’kikh etnografichnykh zv’iazkiv* [Sketches of the history of Ukrainian ethnography and of Russian-Ukrainian ethnographic ties] (Kyïv, Naukova dumka, 1964), 21.

¹⁰ Horlenko, *Narysy*, 3–20.

created by political and ideological demands. Commenting, for instance, on Oleksandr Afanas'ev-Chuzhbins'kyi, he declares this classic of mid-nineteenth-century Ukrainian ethnography to be right in assuming that the Ukrainians are a nation on their own and not just a branch of the Russian nation, but wrong in stressing the differences between Russians and Ukrainians.¹¹ Underlying this late Thaw period author's main assessments was a compensatory logic: consciousness of class struggle as the deeper reason for historical development could make up for closeness to the Ukrainian national movement and guarantee even nationally oriented ethnographers a good reputation. The author observed that since the 1840s, Ukrainian ethnographers had shown a rise in consciousness concerning feudal exploitation. In his eyes this was a step forward from positions holding that the Ukrainian peasants' plight was rooted in the object of ethnographic study itself, that is, in Ukrainian peasants' customs, or in external reasons like the frequent warfare in the area. Ethnographic work that documented the dire consequences of exploitation is praised for having evoked the interest of icons of the Russian revolutionary movement like Chernyshevskii (220). Moreover, mid-nineteenth-century Ukrainian ethnographers are praised for finding evidence of the growing differentiation in the Ukrainian village (227), including the decay of the extended family, thus anticipating one of Lenin's basic assumptions concerning the peasantry.

The compensatory function of class consciousness, which to a considerable degree could make a prominent actor of the Ukrainian national movement an acceptable figure in a Soviet history of ethnography, fully develops in the author's contrasting of Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi and Ivan Franko. The former, though abundantly cited, is presented as the bad example of a nationalist ethnographer who denies class struggle,¹² assuming that the Ukrainian nation is a classless entity (*edynyi potok*). Franko, by contrast, is characterized as a fully class-conscious representative of Ukrainian ethnography, who even goes as far as to reserve the notion *narod* exclusively for the working people. Moreover, this genuine "democrat and revolutionary" is also characterized as progressive because of

¹¹ Ibid., 222–225.

¹² However, Soviet Ukrainian ethnographers even in a period of Stalinization found Hrushevs'kyi an indispensable source: Stepan Shevchenko, "Novi legendy na Zinov'evshchyni" [New legends in the Zinov'evshchyna], in *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* [Ethnographic messenger] 7 (1928): 142–145, refers to him when interpreting the "letters from heaven," which alarmed the authorities (143).

his interest in material culture (17), while less conscious ethnographers limited themselves to spiritual culture (10).

So this Soviet history of Ukrainian ethnography created heroes and anti-heroes. Abstracting from the specific ideological constellation that underlies the work and considering a branch of the historiography of ethnographic research in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union grown from a different ideological position, one notices that this personalized approach is not untypical of that historiography as a whole.

Ukrainian Nation-Builders and Their Ethnographic Passion

Ethnographic writing dealing with a group that was a non-titular nation in two empires could be conceived of as a “national science” in the sense of an organized intellectual approach intended to counter the colonial sciences, which represented the interests of the titular nations and the central governments.¹³ From a Ukrainian national point of view, Ukrainian ethnography was described as a self-chosen task deeply influencing the personal biographies of intellectuals who defended Ukrainian cultural values against the pressure of an imperialistic central state. This is true both for works treating tsarist Russia and works treating the Soviet period. For instance, in 1978 the émigré journal *Suchasnist* published an article about the Ukrainian ethnographer Danylo Sherbakivs’kyi’s tragic personal fate in the first decade of Soviet Ukraine.¹⁴ A 1972 article on Mykhailo Drahomanov in the same journal is more interesting here, for it concentrates on the contents of this eminent figure’s intellectual biography.¹⁵ It follows two lines of inquiry. Primarily it deals with Drahomanov’s argument against alleged Russian-Ukrainian cultural closeness and the political benefit the tsarist government tried to gain from insisting on this closeness. The author cites Drahomanov’s thesis that Ukrainian soldiers’ songs lacked the Russian songs’ patriotic references to the tsar (90), a thesis that demonstrates Drahomanov’s belief in deep differences in mentality. Drahomanov found Ukrainians more inclined to assimilation with the

¹³ Nathaniel Knight, “Science, Empire and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845–1855,” in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. Jane Burbank and David Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 108–141.

¹⁴ Vadym Pavlovs’kyi, “Danylo Mykhailovych Shcherbakivs’kii (1877–1927). Ioho zhittia ta dolia” [Danylo Mykhailovych Shcherbakivs’kii (1877–1927). His life and work], *Suchasnist*’ no. 1 (1978): 31–46.

¹⁵ Odarchenko, “Naukova diial’nist’ Mykhaila Drahomanova.”

Slovaks than with the Russians (89). He also characterized Ukrainian religious legends as similar to Bulgarian ones. In the work under consideration, Drahomanov is cited as providing proof of the Ukrainians' Slavic, but definitely not Russian, cultural affiliation.

A second line of inquiry in Drahomanov's work followed in the article is his search for the Ukrainians' cultural place in the world. Like many contemporaries, Drahomanov was not unaffected by racist theories, and he was interested in the Ukrainians' adherence to the so-called "Aryan" people (86). Drahomanov was also eager to prove links in Ukrainian folklore to Asia and to the Caucasus (93, 96, 98). So he tried to prove Ukrainian cultural independence from Russia and the Russians by describing the manifold relations of Ukrainian folklore that completely bypassed the Russians. However, the author also gives evidence of the ambiguities of a national approach to ethnography, as reflected in Drahomanov's work. For instance, we learn that Drahomanov characterized folk songs as the "books" of a largely illiterate people (87), which meant explaining oral culture by analogy with written culture. Furthermore, the author of the article cites the nineteenth-century discussion of the official Church's influence on folklore. Drahomanov participated in that debate (93), but he did not take a clear position for or against some folklorists' idea that folklore was thoroughly the result of Church (i.e., elite) influence. Working out these contradictory elements in Drahomanov's work, the author—perhaps despite himself—demonstrated that in fact Drahomanov's Ukrainian ethnography needs a subtle approach. The case of Drahomanov shows that, with the passing of Romanticism, intellectuals found it difficult to envisage popular cultural autonomy, even if they criticized the "enlightened" higher social strata for their alienation from national identity. So Drahomanov's national consciousness was a complex phenomenon.¹⁶ Yet for the author of the cited 1972 émigré work on Drahomanov's contribution to Ukrainian ethnography, "nation" was as natural and unquestionable a category as "class" was for the author of the Soviet history of Ukrainian ethnography from 1964.

For a contrast I would like to cite the much earlier reflection on the history of Ukrainian ethnography left by an author less concerned with ideological correctness and more with the quality of ethnographic research. In

¹⁶ Anna Veronika Wendland, "Am Rande der Imperien: Mychajlo Drahomanov und die Anfänge einer europäischen Verflechtungsgeschichte der Ukraine," in *Imperienvergleich. Beispiele und Ansätze aus osteuropäischer Perspektive. Festschrift für Andreas Kappeler*, eds. Guido Hausmann and Angela Rustemeyer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 51–76.

1925 ethnographer Andriy Loboda wrote the foreword for the first volume of the newly founded *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* [Ethnographic Messenger], a short-lived but remarkable journal.¹⁷ Looking back on the recent history of the discipline, Loboda underlined the enormous social meaning of Ukrainian ethnography: it linked Ukrainian intellectuals and lower-class people in an era of Russification. But he obviously was not convinced that the contributions of so many figures in the national movement, for all their merits, were sufficient to make Ukrainian ethnography meet all scientific standards. Loboda proposed a new start for the discipline. Concentrating on immaterial culture in various forms (from folk songs to folk medicine to religious beliefs and common law), the huge bibliography of Ukrainian folklore edited by Loboda gathered works from academic journals of different disciplines, but also from newspapers, from Russia and Austria-Hungary as well as other European countries.¹⁸ This bibliography would have provided Ukrainian ethnography with good opportunities to link its past to its future, had there been much of the latter when the Soviet nationalities policy of the 1920s was abolished in favor of the “Soviet patriotic,” that is the Russian nationalist, direction in the 1930s.

Loboda’s endeavor represents the conspicuous and precarious position of ethnography in an era when the policy of the new Soviet state both called for and refuted ethnography as a national science, just as this policy both called for and refuted manifestations of national identity. The following pages concentrate on the Soviet 1920s as a period of both retrospection and innovation. Analyzing descriptions of traditional culture produced in late imperial Russia and the 1920s, I would like to hint at Soviet ethnographers’ modes of borrowing from the pre-revolutionary era. Trying to determine the ambiguous political essence of ethnography, I will discuss the categories “class” and “nation” as well as concepts of space.

The Distillation of Tradition: Studies of Ukrainian Folklore in their Late Imperial and Early Soviet Facets

Ukrainian ethnography was of particular importance in the early Soviet Union both as a branch of scientific research and in the light of Soviet nationalities policy. Ethnographic research at the Ukrainian Academy of

¹⁷ Andriy Loboda, “Suchasnyi stan i chervovi zavdannia ukraïns’koï etnografii” [The contemporary state and future tasks of Ukrainian ethnography], *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* 1 (1925): 1–4.

¹⁸ Andrievs’kyi, *Bibliohrafiia*.

Sciences was regarded as equal in rank with central institutions of ethnographic research in the early Soviet Union.¹⁹ During the Soviet Ukrainization policy of the 1920s, ethnographic knowledge about Ukraine and the Ukrainians probably became politically more important than at any time before. Terry Martin discusses Ukrainization as one ideal type of the early Soviet strategy to gain the former Russian Empire's nationalities' support for the new regime by promoting the formation of national elites, the use of national languages in all areas of state activity and public life, and "national culture." Different versions of this strategy of indigenization (*ko-renizatsiia*) were applied all over the Soviet Union. But in the case of Ukraine, indigenization ("Ukrainization") was specifically designed to make the Soviet-held part of Ukraine attractive to the inhabitants of the Ukrainian territories held by East Central European countries after World War I. While becoming socialist "in content," Soviet Ukraine also had to become the Ukrainians' Piedmont.²⁰

The formation of a "national culture"—which, according to Terry Martin, was better described by the term "symbolic ethnicity"—was certainly the vaguest topic of indigenization. It aimed at a selection of politically harmless elements from the traditional lifestyle, like "national folklore, [...], dress, food, costumes."²¹ However, it is important that there was a highly normative political demand for Ukrainian and other non-Russian folk culture in the Soviet 1920s. Two examples from different fields of folklore studies demonstrate this political demand. While the first example demonstrates its fulfillment, the second demonstrates its failure. In other words, in one case the folklore under consideration helped to naturalize the class category, while in the other case, researchers came across a type of folklore that questioned both the firmness of the class category and the early Soviet Union's claim to be the world's promoter of progress.

¹⁹ See the institutions mentioned in a programmatic article in the journal *Etnografiia*: D.A. Zolotarev, "Voprosy izucheniia byta derevni SSSR" [Questions of the study of the village in the USSR], *Etnografiia*, no. 1/2 (1926): 45–53, especially 47.

²⁰ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001): 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

Ukrainian Ethnic Capitalism and the Transnational Class of the Exploited

In my first example, folklore studies were directed towards the qualitative dimension of quantifiable processes of social development. Folklore was to shed light on what statistics left in the dark. Much of early twentieth-century ethnography was dealing with societies as they were in the past and would not be in the future. However, it is also intriguing to examine the interplay between ethnographic description and branches of knowledge preparing the ground for guided change. Ethnography and statistics were related in this respect, as the latter was an indispensable instrument of diagnosis for those who intended to change society by resolute intervention. This becomes clear when we examine population censuses using and modifying ethnic categories. Counting the population according to ethnic criteria was one of ethnographers' functions in the early Soviet period, when pre-revolutionary society was supposed to be fundamentally changing. Concerning the registration of numerically minor ethnic groups in censuses, the role accorded to ethnography in this process seems evident. Their research could be used to determine whether a group deserved the status of a separate ethnic entity and thus to justify the group's inclusion into, or exclusion from, the census.²² By contrast, the decision to define Ukrainians as an independent ethnic group was undoubtedly less dependent on ethnographers' testimony and more on political principles, for it ruled out the idea of one Russian nation that included Ukrainians (and Belarusians). However, there are strong and politically relevant relations between statistics and ethnography in the case of the Ukrainians, too. They date back to the pre-revolutionary era.

Ethnography dealing with Ukrainians was linked up with statistics as early as the 1850s. It was an economist and statistician who catalyzed the later founding of the Commission for the Description of the Governments in the Kiev Educational District.²³ Ethnographers and statisticians alike were interested in the relationship between Ukrainian peasants' high mortality

²² Juliette Cadiot has examined how ethnic categories in late imperial censuses were transformed in the early Soviet Union: Zhul'ett Kadio, "Kak oporiadochvali raznoobrazie: spiski i kvalifikatsii natsional'nostei v Rossiiskoi Imperii i v Sovetskom Soiuze (1897–1939 gg.)" [How diversity was ordered. Lists and classifications of nationalities in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union (1897–1939)], *Ab imperio* no. 4 (2002): 177–206. For Hirsch's analysis of the representations of nationalities in the Ukraine in early Soviet censuses see footnote 2.

²³ Horlenko, *Narysy*, 187.

rate and their daily life.²⁴ In the second half of the nineteenth century, the production of statistics in the Russian Empire expanded. During the period under study here, the last decades of imperial Russia and the first decades of Soviet Russia, countrywide population censuses were carried out. The power of these big censuses lay in the combination of data on the size of all ethnic groups and their structure—that is, for instance, their level of literacy or their economic activity. Interest in the registration of the population's economic activity in censuses grew as the government strived for modernization, that is, with the drive to industrialize in the 1890s. In the early Soviet era, statistics on economic activity measured the respective group's ability to adjust to capitalism, and later socialism.²⁵

Dealing with the Jews of the 1920s, Deborah Yalen has discussed the meaning accorded to the relative size of professional groups. In the case of the Ukrainians, the question of the relative size of groups dealing with different forms of economic activity was of similar importance. The vast majority of Ukrainians were peasants and thus, in the Bolshevik hierarchy, belonged to a “backward” class. The majority of the city dwellers and the factory workers in Ukraine were not Ukrainians. As Terry Martin has shown, this made the indigenization concept in Ukraine an issue of conflict. Tightly connected to peasant society, the Ukrainian element, which indigenization, respectively Ukrainization, was to strengthen, was regarded as hostile to progress. Adversaries of Ukrainization interpreted the relationship between the Russian city and the Ukrainian village in Ukraine as a conflict between a high and a low culture, with the latter endangering modernization. The idea that the culturally developed city would learn the Ukrainian language in order to help the underdeveloped village was the compromise formula finally set in order to reconcile Ukrainization with the fears of Bolshevik leaders thinking in Leninist terms.²⁶

But assigning the Ukrainian population of Ukraine on the one hand and the Russians in Ukraine on the other to professional groups and thus, in the Soviet context, to the major social classes on the basis of statistics was

²⁴ Ibid., 219.

²⁵ Yalen discusses foreign Jewish scholars' critique of Soviet statistics. These scholars considered Soviet statistics to be falsified according to ideological criteria, which reflected the Bolshevik preference for the working class and their discrimination against small-scale traders, an important professional group among the Jews. “Jewish Bolshevik theoreticians” followed this official line criticized by colleagues abroad and identified the *shtetl* as a “site of unregulated commercial exchange between city and countryside.” Yalen, “On the Social–Economic Front,” 239–245.

²⁶ Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 81.

not all. There were other politically important aspects of ethnic economic activity that statistics depicted only roughly. In this case ethnography gave a deeper insight into the matter: it provided for the kind of information for which nowadays social research relies on qualitative analysis as an indispensable part of quantitative surveys. The example of the *chumak*, the Ukrainian trader of salt and salted dried fish in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and the first half of the nineteenth century, demonstrates the immeasurable moral and political quality of a traditional institution of “national” economic life. The *chumak*’s transport and trade was a form of commercial activity tightly connected with the inner structure of the Ukrainian village and the peasant household. *Chumatstvo* could be both a form of entrepreneurship and a form of work for wages. It had a long tradition in Ukraine, mainly in the pre-statistics age. The salt trade under the circumstances of an ever-present steppe frontier connected *chumatstvo* directly to the characteristics of the Ukrainian territory. Ukrainian ethnography primarily dealt with *chumatstvo* because of its contribution to the heritage of Ukrainian folk songs.²⁷ By doing so it discovered an element of what might be called ethnic trade capitalism.

In the early Soviet period the social structure of the countryside and the prospects of the capitalist or socialist transformation of this element were of high interest. So the *chumak* remained a topic for ethnography.²⁸ *Chumatstvo* was a complex phenomenon²⁹ that could be associated with the early Soviet era in different ways. The cooperative organization of *chumatstvo* fit well with Lenin’s focus on cooperatives after the end of war communism. Moreover, the *chumak* as a trader must have evoked associations with the *nepman*, the private trader. This was, however, also a way of discrediting the latter: in 1927 an ethnographer located the source of a new, NEP form of *chumatstvo* in the period of starvation immediately after the civil war.³⁰ By this logic, NEP had normalized archaic forms of economic activity that were reanimated by a major humanitarian

²⁷ The 1930 *Bibliography of Ukrainian Folklore* mentions a number of works on *chumatstvo* published from the 1840s to 1914. See the index in Andrievs’kyi, *Bibliohrafiia*, 734.

²⁸ Pylyp Klymenko, “Novi doslidy nad chumatskoio ekonomikoio, pobutom ta pisennitstiiu” [New research on the Chumak economy, way of life, and songs], *Etnohrafiichnyi visnyk* 9 (1930): 133–142.

²⁹ *Chumatstvo* could be interpreted as a form of entrepreneurship, but also as a proof of collectivism, which was how mid-nineteenth-century ethnographer V.V. Tarnovs’kyi understood it (Horlenko, *Narysy*, 217).

³⁰ Nikanor Dmytruk, “Holod na Ukraïni r. 1921” [Starvation in Ukraine in 1921], *Etnohrafiichnyi visnyk* 4 (1927): 79–87, especially 86.

catastrophe. *Chumatstvo* was also of interest in the context of the debate about Russian politics transforming Ukraine into a “European colony” of Russia.³¹ In 1930 a book review in *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* discussed the impact of imperial Russia’s politics on Ukrainian *chumatstvo* in the eighteenth century, asking if the central state had been a promoter or an obstacle to that form of Ukrainian economic activity.³² However, the most interesting point about *chumatstvo* in the context studied here is its close relation to a genre in folklore that the journal *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* called the “songs of the (rural, A. R.) hired people [*naimyts’ki pisni*],” suggesting that these songs reflected the plight created by the monetary economy in Ukraine itself and beyond it. The related category “wage earners’ songs” was established to give insight into the mind of the exploited classes as early Soviet ethnographers imagined it.³³ Folk tradition was not regarded as biologically conditioned.³⁴ However, it was perceived as original and natural. Thus the “wage earners’ songs” helped to further naturalize the class category, and it could be used as a means to reinforce the position of class as compared to nation. Moreover, placing the *chumak* among the “wage earners,” who in their songs represented the working classes’ plight under tsarism, was also a way to characterize the revival of *chumatstvo* under NEP in the 1920s as a step back to pre-revolutionary-type crude exploitation.

Building genres in folklore along lines of class adherence in a monetary economy helped ethnographers and their readers to concretely imagine the “super-structure” of the Marxist model of society that had become obligatory for all scientific approaches to society. It also prepared the construction of folklore as a means of propaganda, like folk music written by composers in the era of Stalin.³⁵ However, the class scheme reflected

³¹ On the debate initiated by Mykhailo Volobuev: Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 3rd ed. (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: Toronto University Press, 2000), 393.

³² Klymenko, *Novi doslidy*, 135.

³³ Comp. Vira Bilets’ka, “Naimyts’ki pisni” [Songs of the hired people], *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* 9 (1930): 135–151, especially 135, and Ivan Pavlovych Berezovs’kyi, *Ukraïns’ka radians’ka folklorystyka. Etapy rozvytku i problematyka*. (Kyïv, Naukova dumka, 1968), 127. Bilec’ka also published writings on miners’ folklore.

³⁴ Cf. the emphasis on the “biologization of the social” in recent works on the sciences in late imperial Russia, notably in Daniel Beer, *Renovating Russia: The Human Sciences and the Fate of Liberal Modernity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008). For an assessment of biologist tendencies in Soviet ethnography in the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s: Hirsch, *Empire of nations*, 239–252.

³⁵ Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1991).

in the cited folklore studies on *chumatstvo* was fragile in itself. Examples from another crucial area of ethnographers' handling of Ukrainian folklore show how difficult it was for researchers to apply a model ascribing specific states of mind to specific classes.

Ukrainian Popular Spirituality and the Fragility of the Class Category in Early Soviet Folklore Studies

The second topic of late imperial and early Soviet Ukrainian folklore studies I would like to discuss is popular beliefs. Popular beliefs were a key topic of nineteenth-century ethnography, which was related to the national movements all over Europe. Unfortunately, the interpretation of popular spirituality and popular religion by the national movements remains largely unexplored.³⁶ However, we do know that in the early twentieth century the Catholic Church was criticized for its historical repression of pagan cults, which were stylized as a national heritage.³⁷ As for similarities and differences in the way ethnographers in Western and Eastern Europe perceived popular beliefs, we cannot yet make conclusions. In the early modern period Eastern Europe and Muscovy, respectively the Russian Empire, had experienced less repression against "popular religion" than many parts of Western Europe. As for Orthodoxy in Russia and Ukraine, critique of the Church as a stranger to national identity was much less evident than in countries of Latin Christianity, because of the closeness of vernacular and liturgical language. In the course of the nineteenth century, however, some grounds appeared for defining the Church as alien to the bulk of the population. The rise of education as a marker of class adherence played a major role in late-imperial Russia, and the parish clergy established itself as a part of the educated classes. By contrast, the peasants were perceived as captives to superstition.³⁸ Given the tsarist state's repression of the Uniate Church in Right Bank Ukraine to force the population to accept Orthodoxy, this was not the only religious source of

³⁶ The best work on this topic I know is Zayarnyuk's article on the Ukrainian national movement (see note 2).

³⁷ An extreme form of this critique is the Nazi interpretation of the early-modern witch hunt. Cf. Wolfgang Behringer, "Neun Millionen Hexen. Entstehung, Tradition und Kritik eines populären Mythos," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 49, no. 11 (November 1998): 664–685, esp. 673–676.

³⁸ On the perception of superstition: Simon Dixon, "Superstition in Imperial Russia," *Past and Present*, supplement 3 (August 2008): 207–228.

tension in that era. Nevertheless, in terms of ethnographers' future perception of Ukrainian popular beliefs, it can be considered an important one.

In the Russian Empire, elements in the life of national groups that could be interpreted as roots of or obstacles to cultural evolution were described in many ways, but these descriptions were not bound to one obligatory general interpretation. By contrast, in the early Soviet Union, indigenization officially ranked the nationalities in a cultural hierarchy. Despite the preponderance of peasants among the Ukrainians, the authorities ranked the Ukrainians among the group of "Western," more "progressive" nations as compared to nations in the Soviet East, as Terry Martin has demonstrated. The decisive criteria according to which the Soviet officials determined the cultural status of nations was literacy,³⁹ a quality measured by statistics. However, given the Marxist idea of religion as an obstacle to the development of class consciousness and as serving the aims of the "exploiters," the extent to which social or national groups were still influenced by religion could also be regarded as an indicator of backwardness or progressiveness. So, popular belief mattered. The monumental bibliography of Ukrainian folklore mentioned above, which Ukrainian ethnographers worked on in the late 1920s, shows that early Soviet ethnographers inherited a great number of works dealing with Ukrainian popular belief from their imperial predecessors. Two poles in the late imperial ethnographic discourse on this topic shall be mentioned here: popular belief as a feature of national identity and popular belief as a symptom of superstition.

National Demonology

One form in which popular belief was frequently represented in ethnographic writing on the Ukrainians from the 1840s to World War I was "demonology."⁴⁰ In the course of the nineteenth century, the integration

³⁹ Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 127.

⁴⁰ Andrievs'kyi's bibliography mentions thirty-three titles for "demonology" in general (Andrievs'kyi, *Bibliohrafiia*, 703). There are many more works if one includes the more specific ones, like those on witches or on the *domovyk*. The topic proved of long-lasting interest. The 1980s exile *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* has a chapter on demonology: I. Korovytsky, "Demonology," in *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, eds. Volodymyr Kubiyovych and Danylo Husar Struk, vol. 1 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 656–657. A.P. Ponomar'ov gives an overview of the interpretations of demonology in nineteenth-century Ukrainian ethnography (as an expression of genuine

of the topic into the literary canon by Gogol' enhanced its cultural weight. Descriptions of "Little Russians" meeting ghosts in journals of the 1840s⁴¹ hint at the larger context of Gogol's addressing the topic. However, the study of "Ukrainian demonology" in the last decades of the Russian Empire went far beyond such elaboration of individual experience of the supernatural. Demonology was considered a major part of popular cosmology. As such, it was the object of lengthy descriptions showing a whole range of belief in ghosts, witches, and other such phenomena.⁴² These descriptions envisaged the link between man and his "natural" surroundings in an abstract way. Thus they established a national spiritual heritage without expressing claims to concrete places for the Ukrainian nation. Ukrainians' belief in demonic forces was sometimes presented as the manifestation of old Slav religion. In this way Ukrainians were accorded an ethnic past without serious consequences for a national present. In works on demonology, place is nature, village, or house, not a national territory. So the representation of Ukrainian demonology in ethnographic research did not contradict far-reaching Russian (or other) imperial claims. However, it did express ethnic distinctiveness. Although compatible with imperial censorship in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, this large topic was nevertheless open to elaboration from a national point of view, which would, for instance, argue that Ukrainian demons were the relics of pre-Christian Rus' gods.⁴³ This made them evidence of the legitimacy of Ukrainian claims to the Kiev heritage.

The study of Ukrainian demonology tended to accord all Ukrainians a common specific set of beliefs and thus an independent ethnic quality,

dualistic "popular" belief, but also as an expression of Church, that is, elite influence): A.P. Ponomar'ov, "Tsaryna narodnoï uiavy ta її klasychni rozrobky" [Popular imagination as a field of research and its classical revision], in *Ukraïntsi: narodni viruvannia, povir'ia, demonologiiia* [Ukrainians. Popular beliefs, superstition, demonology], ed. Iu. G. Mediuk (Kyïv, Lybid', 1991), 5–24, especially 8, 20. Ponomar'ov himself sees characteristic traits in demonology that distinguish Ukrainians from Russians and Belarusians (16, on *mavky/rusalki*).

⁴¹ For example, Dmitriukov, "Ocherki demonologii Malorossiian" [Sketches of the demonology of the Little Russians], *Maiak* 13 (1844): 55–58; "Ocherki demonologii malorossiian" [Sketches of the demonology of the Little Russians], *Moskvitianin* 6, no. 12 (1842): 112–120 (about the Poltava *guberniia*).

⁴² Good examples are the work mentioned in note 40 as well as a later description of beliefs in demons in the same region: A.V. Bogdanovich, *Sbornik svedenii o Poltavskoi gubernii* [Volume of messages from the Poltava *guberniia*] (Poltava: Tipografiia Gubernskogo Pravleniia, 1877), 232–237.

⁴³ Korovytsky, "Demonology," 656–657; Ponomar'ov, *Tsaryna narodnoï uiavy*, 8.

while leaving aside the split in Ukrainians' spiritual life that had characterized the whole area and the nation since the establishment of the Church Union in the sixteenth-century Polish-Ukrainian Commonwealth. The Ukrainian brand of surviving "paganism" was made an objective factor: it mattered precisely because it was perceived as a trait defining ethnic identity. From this point of view, Ukrainian demons were beyond historical circumstances and moral assessments.

This is, however, just one attitude towards relics of "paganism" found in ethnographic writing on Ukrainians in late imperial Russia. An important group of authors dealing with Ukrainian folklore held a completely different point of view. They were Orthodox priests in both Left Bank and Right Bank Ukraine; the latter had been annexed by the Russian Empire during the third partition of Poland-Lithuania in 1795.⁴⁴ For them Ukrainian belief in demons was not part of the national heritage but a symptom of superstition.

Imperial Diagnoses of Superstition

While the authors of the ethnographic descriptions of demonology, trying to give an overview of this kind of popular belief, often relied on sources other than firsthand observation, the priests' main argument was that they had personally witnessed the common people's shocking superstitious practices. These priests may well have been ethnographers despite themselves, acting within the institutional and communicative frame set by the parallel administrative structures of the state and the Orthodox Church in imperial Russia.⁴⁵ Orthodox priests in Right Bank Ukraine were eager to prove the parishioners' adherence to Orthodoxy, their self-perception as "Russians," and the relation between the two. Firmly convinced of the vitality of one Russian nation including the Ukrainians,⁴⁶ these authors wrote frankly about Catholic and Uniate religious influence without con-

⁴⁴ Andrievs'kyi's bibliography mentions 127 ethnographic works on the Ukrainians published in the *Podol'skie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* alone (Andrievs'kyi, *Bibliohrafiia*, 308).

⁴⁵ The priests published in the *Eparkhial'nye vedomosti* [Diocese notices] and acted in the framework of diocese structures, which were built as an equivalent to *guberniia* structures. Conversely, the *guberniia* structure, which included the administration of religion by the diocese, symbolized territorial integration.

⁴⁶ A manifesto of this conviction is D. Sinitskii, "Religioznaia storona zhizni nashego naroda" [The religious side of the life of our people], *Podol'skie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* [Podolia diocese notices] no. 3 (1865): 89–98; no. 4 (1865): 142–163; no. 7 (1865): 300–324; no. 12 (1865): 518–549.

ceiving it as a force of ethnic assimilation.⁴⁷ In these priests' eyes the spiritual menace to the "people" was not Catholicism or the Uniate Church, but the survival of paganism.⁴⁸ The Orthodox priests took part in the tsarist administration of Right Bank Ukraine, but they demonstrated in their writing that administrative control did not guarantee spiritual control. Superstition was the dark counterpart of the peasants' deep piety, which the priests depicted with great eagerness and not without attacks on decadent intellectuals.⁴⁹ For the priests superstition was not folklore, but a deeply disturbing phenomenon.

It is intriguing to see that early Soviet Ukrainian ethnographers' approach to Ukrainian popular religion had more in common with these pre-revolutionary priests' argumentation than with ethnographic description in the late-imperial works on Ukrainian demonology. A series of works from the early Soviet Ukrainian journal *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* [Ethnographic Messenger] demonstrates this.

Soviet Diagnoses of Superstition

As mentioned above, the works on Ukrainian demonology claimed to give insight into an ethnic cosmology. Works presenting manifestations of religious belief or spirituality as elements of a cosmological system can be found in the contemporary all-Soviet equivalent of *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* [Ethnographic Messenger], the Moscow journal *Etnografiia* [Ethnography]. Significantly, these works were dedicated to non-European peoples.⁵⁰ *Etnografiia* testifies to early Soviet ethnography's dealing with

⁴⁷ For example, N. Aleksandrovich, "Blagochestivye obychai pravoslavnykh khristian Volynskoi gubernii" [Pious customs of the Christian peasants of the Volhynia guberniia], *Podol'skie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* [Podolia diocese notices], no. 12 (1866): 426–436, especially 429.

⁴⁸ N.D., "Cherty iz religioznoi zhizni naroda" [Strokes from the religious life of the people], *Podol'skii eparkhial'nyi vedomosti* [Podolia diocese notices], no. 8 (1900): 159–172, especially 167–172. Priests in Left Bank Ukraine also dealt with peasant "paganism": "Opisanie iazycheskikh obriadov, sueverii i predrazsudkov, dlia iskoreniia svoego trebiushchikh dukhovnogo sveta" [Account of pagan customs, superstition, and preconceptions, which need to be extinguished by the Holy Ghost], *Chernigovskie eparkhial'nye izvestiia* [Chernogov diocese notices] 37, no. 1 (1897): 18–23; 37, no. 15 (1897): 552–555; 37, no. 16 (1897): 584–587.

⁴⁹ N.D., "Cherty iz religioznoi zhizni," 160–161.

⁵⁰ Examples: E.A. Kreinovich, "Ocherk kosmogonicheskikh predstavlenii giliak o-va Sakhalina" [Sketch of the cosmological notions of the Gilyak from Sakhalin Island], *Etnografiia* 4 (1929): 78–102; E.A. Kreinovich, "Sobakovodstvo giliakov i ego otrazhenie

“primitive religions” that could be decoded as systems, thus meeting scholars’ and political theorists’ interest of getting to know the basis of human culture. As for peoples like the Ukrainians, whose spiritual life was closely linked to more than 900 years of Church tradition, the evolutionist dogma of early Soviet ethnography did not allow a similar approach. The journal *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* chose a different one. It is significant that the authors of the journal did not concentrate on demonology, the antithesis of Christian belief, but on a topic right from the core of that belief, which, in the course of Soviet secularization, was accorded the status of an object to research. In religious matters the journal concentrated on one specific type of event and popular movement: miracles.⁵¹ This was a logical choice, considering the attempt to describe a society reacting to crises, which is evident from many pages of *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk*. The journal also dealt with how people lived through war, including the civil war, and the revolutions. Analyzing miracles and miracle stories, the authors of the journal saw religion and spirituality as a psychical expression of crisis and only to a much lesser degree as a cultural heritage, which the nineteenth-century authors writing about demonology had stressed. Some of the authors of *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* tried hard to detect the official dogma of a class structure in religious events and religious experience. However, they themselves sometimes hint at the limits of this approach.

v religioznoi ideologii” [Dog-breeding of the Gilyak and its reflection in religious thought], *Etnografiia* 5, no. 4 (1930): 29–55; P. Preobrazhenskii, “Realizm primitivnykh religioznykh verovanii” [The realism of primitive religious beliefs], *Etnografiia* 5, no. 3 (1930): 5–21; L. Kostikov, “Bogovy oleni v religioznykh verovaniakh khasovo” [Divine elks in the religious beliefs of the Khasovo (Nentsy)], *Etnografiia* 5, no. 1–2 (1930): 115–132.

⁵¹ Nikanor Dmytruk, “Pro chudesa na Ukraïni roku 1923-go” [On the miracle in Ukraine in 1923], *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* 1 (1925): 50–53; Olena Pchilka, “Ukraïns’ki narodni legenydy ostann’ogo chasu” [Recent Ukrainian folk legends], *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* 1 (1925): 41–49; Vasil’ Kravchenko, “Psal’mi, shcho v 1923–24 rr. spivaly prochany pidchas podorozhuvan’ do riznykh chudes” [Psalms that were sung by pilgrims in 1923 and 1924 on their journeys to several miracles], *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* 4 (1927): 71–77; Nikanor Dmytruk, “Holod na Ukraïni r. 1921” [Starvation in Ukraine in 1921], *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* 4 (1927): 79–87; Shevchenko, “Novi legenydy na Zinov’evshchyni”; Nikanor Dmytruk, “Chudesa na Poltavshchyni r. 1928” [Miracles in the Poltava region in 1928], *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* 8 (1929): 168–180 and a few more articles. Volodymyr Diakiv has recently used these texts as a source for Ukrainians’ mentality in the 1920s (Volodymyr Djakiv, „Fol’klor chudes“ u pidradians’ki Ukraïny 1920-h rokiv (L’viv, Institut narodoznavstva NAN, 2008). This question is beyond the scope of this article.

The journal's focus on one topic in matters of religion makes it easier to figure out which approach *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* took in the decisive period of late NEP and beginning collectivization. To be sure, whatever ideological orientation can be deciphered in the articles, the miracle stories are deeply impressive narratives, which the reader readily trusts as documents of crisis and trauma.⁵² However, in our context these narratives are mainly considered ethnographic works in their relation to Ukraine as a cultural place setting as well as a politically defined territory. The places that the narratives told about were two spots on the map of Right Bank Ukraine. One was Kalynivka in Podolia, incidentally a Right Bank name-sake of the place near Kursk where Nikita Khrushchev, later first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, was born. According to what ethnographers called the "legend," in 1923 a holy image on a crossroads near the Right Bank village of Kalynivka was shot and miraculously started bleeding. This inspired a pilgrimage movement, with many people carrying crosses and assembling at Kalynivka for prayer. The other place ethnographers reported on was the Safatova (also called "Osapatova" or "Iosafatova") Valley, which people identified with the biblical place of the Last Judgment. While the plot of the stories remained nearly the same in works published in *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* during the second half of the 1920s,⁵³ their interpretations did not.

An early work on Kalynivka and the Safatova Valley depicted complexity without claiming to exhaustively explain it. In 1925 Olena Pchilka published a study dealing with these two places in Podolia. In her interpretation they stood for the flight from a traumatizing present, as can typically be observed with people who, in their lack of "culture," that is of rationalism, are dominated by a "native [*pervobytnyi*]" view of the world. These people seek solace in the past and in religious belief.⁵⁴ Significantly, the author mentions the harsh critique of religion by the new authorities as one of the factors that upset traditionally-minded people and provoked that kind of reaction (42). Concerning links between the legends and Ukraine's specific territorial and cultural situation, the author of this 1925 work on the miracle legends is careful in her assessments. Interested

⁵² These stories deserve their own comparative study that would include similar Russian material. Cf. Nicolas Werth, "Rumeurs défaitistes et apocalyptiques dans l'URSS des années 1920 et 1930," *Vingtième siècle* 71 (July–September 2001): 25–35.

⁵³ In other "legends" it is, for instance, not a cross on crossroads, but an icon in a church that is desecrated (Dmytruk, "Chudesa," 169).

⁵⁴ Pchilka, "Ukraïns'ki narodni legendy," 43.

in the religious symbol at the center of the 1923 miracle legends, the cross, she reminds the reader of the role Right Bank crossroads crosses, with their figurative depiction of Christ, played in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the 1860s. On the background of Russification, they were interpreted as a manifestation of Polish and Catholic influence. To the authors' mind this was incorrect, for crossroads crosses had first been erected in Slavic countries during Christianization. They symbolized Christian influence on the Slavs much more than Catholic influence on the Ukrainians.

Nevertheless the author does report on the demonstration of national consciousness in Church rites. She refers to her own observations "in a small Podolian town" in autumn 1923, when she assisted at a mass for pilgrims carrying crosses and a procession (46). The author stresses that no "lords" (*paniv*) were present, just burghers and peasants. Listening to the pleas, the ethnographer was struck by one phrase that asked God to give the "Ukrainian people" victory over their enemies (48). This reference to the Ukrainian nation did not, however, stop people from assigning the miracle a universal character and thus enhancing its significance. Pchilka emphasizes that miracles in the "legends" are not reserved for Orthodox nor even for Christian believers alone: a Jewish mother's prayer for her blind child was likewise supposed to have been heard by God (48). The legends treated in this report are not clearly anti-Bolshevik, as the offender who shoots the holy image and thus triggers the miracle by making the image bleed is not characterized as a Bolshevik (43). This is different in another report on the topic published in *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* in the same year. N. Dmytruk's 1925 article cites a version of the legend in which a group of Bolsheviks approaches a cross on horseback and begins to shoot the figure of Jesus Christ. When a bullet hits Jesus's right side, blood begins to flow.⁵⁵ The author also describes a direct confrontation between the Bolshevik authority in the village, the village Soviet (*sel'rada*), and a group of pilgrims who entered the place (51). Moreover, Dmytruk reports on peasants' religious assemblies in that same year. These assemblies were organized as dinners held to commemorate Jesus's death, "as for any deceased." They inspired the author himself with a broad deist interpretation: "The idea of God's death [...] dominates the peasants' mind" (51). Dmytruk, like Pchilka, also reports on the Safatova Valley and the apocalyptic beliefs related to it (51-52). In Dmytruk's study the social group that keeps the "legends" alive is the peasants of

⁵⁵ Dmytruk, "Pro chudesa na Ukraïni," 50.

Volhynia and Podolia. However, the author does not characterize the movement initiated by the “legend” about the Kalynivka cross as a pure peasant movement: it was much larger and also mobilized “almost all town dwellers [*meshkantsi*] except for the Jews” (51). Dmytruk’s colleague Pchilka is inclined to characterize the movement as a strategy chosen by those unaffected by rationalism, as the result of a structural problem of modernization, and, more specifically, as the expression of an irrational lower-class ideology comparable in function to esoteric ideologies held by contemporary educated people, like theosophy. Dmytruk, for his part, resorts to a different vocabulary, calling the movement a “mass psychosis” assuming traits of “fanaticism,” against which the authorities’ measures like arrests, removing the figure of Christ from the Kalynivka cross, and then cutting down the whole cross proved ineffective. Only after a prophecy which had announced the end of the world in 1924 had failed did the author feel safe to state, in 1925, that “the legend is dying out” (52).

However, in a 1927 study dealing with the 1921 famine in Ukraine, Dmytruk himself demonstrated that this was not necessarily a final death.⁵⁶ He argued that the roots of the “epidemic” of miracles lay in the period of famine, which made people conceive signs of God’s wrath and then try to prevent it (81–82). According to this author, the miracles were an expression of the peasants’ fatalistic view of economic success or failure. From this point of view, it was evident that a new crisis would bring about new miracles. The same article depicts the period of famine in Ukraine as a test of social coherence or, more precisely, as a proof of social polarization, describing how rich peasants enriched themselves even further at the expense of the starving city-dwellers (83). More specific than this argument, which could refer to any region struck by famine in the European part of the Russian Empire, was the description of the Ukrainian peasants’ cold reception of children brought by the authorities from famine-stricken parts of the Volga region: “God has punished them, because they evoked his wrath [...]. On the Volga the Communists do not believe in God” (80). While not clearly alluding to Ukrainian separatism, this motive demonstrated the contradictions in the new Soviet state as partially conditioned by the peasants’ traditional way of seeing.

A new tone entered the discussion in *Etnohrafičnyi visnyk* in 1928. An article commented on a “letter from heaven” circulating in two Ukrainian villages and claimed that the peasants were reproducing and

⁵⁶ Dmytruk, “Holod na Ukraïni r. 1921.”

further disseminating the letter's text. The author warns about "certain circles" of the rural population trying to "fabricate" something like the 1923 miracle movement. He reminds his readers of the role of "individual (*okremi*) popes, in that movement. While alluding to subversion as a reason of religious movements, he also emphasizes that the new "decisive attack on the private and capitalist elements in the economy of the USSR," the intensification of class conflict, and the bad weather conditions were prone to "promote the religious mood" of certain parts of the rural population.⁵⁷ In 1929 another article by Dmytruk, now treating miracles reported in 1928 in the Poltava area, corroborated that the "religious mass psychosis" of 1923 had been reanimated.⁵⁸ Dmytruk described the subversion of a monarchist peasant woman who told stories about icon miracles while hiding objects of the cult of the Russian imperial family in her home and disseminating tsarist propaganda (172–173). Thus the author took part in anti-kulak polemics. However, he also stressed the possible consequences of the authorities' intervention into scandals about icons and the miracles supposed to emerge from them: most of the peasants in the village of Batazhkova near Poltava at first did not really believe in the wondrous forces of their icon. Only when the icon became famous in more remote villages and when pilgrims as well as an expert commission arrived did the local peasantry begin to insist on the icon's outstanding qualities (169–170). The appearance of expert commissions even promoted a new narrative in the legends about miracles: divine punishment against unbelieving experts (171). Dmytruk also studied apocalyptic visions, which are well-known from the early Soviet countryside. There is, however, a line of argumentation that gives the article some specific weight in the Ukrainian context: Dmytruk stressed that the center of gravity of the 1923 miracle movement had been in Right Bank Ukraine. Now it had shifted to the Left Bank (168). The new movement was characterized as less strong than the former one on the Right Bank (180). Even so, such miracles indicated that the conditions for the firm establishment of Bolshevik rule and its efforts toward ubiquitous secularization were not ideal even in the part of Ukraine that had, longer than the Right Bank, been a part of the Soviet Union's predecessor state. Neither regions nor classes were immune to being affected by miracles, as not only peasants

⁵⁷ Shevchenko, "Novi legendy," 143.

⁵⁸ Dmytruk, "Chudesna na Poltavshchyni". The author of a 1968 Soviet work on folklore studies in Soviet Ukraine praises Dmytruk for his "progressive" criticism of this "pseudofolklore": Berezovs'kyi, *Ukrains'ka radians'ka folklorystyka*, 121.

but also city dwellers were involved in the miracle movements. This worked against an important part of the Ukrainization concept: that the progressive city would have to learn Ukrainian to enable it to instruct the backward village. Following Dmytruk, one could conclude that Soviet Ukraine might risk becoming not the Piedmont of all Ukrainians, but the Waterloo of progress.

The changing arguments in the articles dedicated to miracles reflected a growing adaptation to political demand. In the early Soviet Union the political claim to active and ubiquitous secularization made it obligatory to combat religion. As the 1920s wore on, ethnographers publishing in *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* ceded to this pressure. In light of the religious manifestations identified as subversive, they depicted national specificities like the Ukrainian Right Bank/Left Bank constellation, which could be understood as problems of control and thus stimulate authoritarian “solutions.”⁵⁹ However, despite efforts for conformity in works on the Ukrainians’ religious behavior, the journal *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk* did not satisfy the authorities in the period of Stalinization. Like *Etnografiia*, the all-Soviet organ of ethnography, the journal was closed down when indigenization politics, that proclaimed revision of pre-revolutionary “Great Russian chauvinism” by Soviet rule, gave way to Soviet patriotism.⁶⁰

Conclusion

This article has discussed some aspects of late imperial and early Soviet Ukrainian ethnography that are outside the focus on important individuals’ intellectual biographies favored by the historiography of the discipline. My approach was to look at the borrowing from pre-revolutionary

⁵⁹ However, these ethnographers, interested in sociology and social psychology, also considered the counterproductive effects of state control. Their approach is certainly closer to today’s cultural anthropology than are the lengthy descriptions of Ukrainian ghosts and demons in pre-revolutionary ethnography. A work about “ethnology” as a national science and cultural anthropology in today’s Lithuania inspires reflection on how ethnology/ethnography discouraged or encouraged the establishment of cultural anthropology: Vytis Čiubrinskas, “Social/Cultural Anthropology in Lithuania: The Politics and Practice of the Discipline,” *Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis* 13, *Studia Antropologica* 2, no. 13 (2006): 89–102.

⁶⁰ Hirsch sees less of a contrast between the 1920s and 1930s nationalities policy than Martin, arguing that “from the start Soviet policies were oriented towards the amalgamation of ethnohistorical groups” (Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 9, footnote 21).

Ukrainian ethnography in early Soviet folklore studies. Discussing studies on *chumak* songs, I have demonstrated how early Soviet ethnographers constructed a brand of folklore as a link between the old and the new era. Given the Marxist-Leninist model with its economic focus, the economic activity of the peoples of the USSR was easy to rank and to arrange in such a way. Ethnographers described *chumatstvo* as an ethnic form of trade capitalism under particular territorial conditions. This form of economic activity was categorized according to the paradigm that there was an empire-wide historical class of the exploited who supposedly commemorated their own fate in a specific type of folklore.

By contrast, ethnographers faced difficulties in interpreting another brand of folklore: expressions of religious belief. The given Marxist-Leninist tool sets were much poorer in the field of religion than in economics. Yet religion was an object of and a catalyst for theory-building concerning human cultural development in Soviet ethnography in the 1920s. Scholars were fascinated with religious phenomena in societies that could be classified as *pervobytny* and thus serve as laboratories of research on the early stages of the cultural evolution of mankind. From a political point of view, religious beliefs as characteristics of basic cultural “backwardness” could then be easily ascribed to “backward” ethnic groups in order to confirm their position in the early Soviet ranking of nations.⁶¹

Backwardness reflected in the religious behavior of members of a nation classified as progressive (like the Ukrainians) was a different case, far less supportive of the nationalities policy of the early Soviet state. *Etnohrafichnyi visnyk*, a journal keen on describing the popular experience of the immediate past and of the Soviet present, reflected manifestations of religious feelings in Ukrainians’ reactions to crises and change. Dealing with religious behavior, ethnographers discovered a disturbing kind of folklore. To return to Andriy Zayarnyuk’s observation cited at the beginning of this article, the religious beliefs described by these ethnographers expressed a subversive perception of time, for apocalyptic moods were incompatible with rationalization and with the reconciliation of nation and progress. Occurring on the left bank of the Dnieper, these religious beliefs also discredited the Soviet interpretation of Ukraine’s territorial situation, for they demonstrated that the Soviet part of Ukraine was far from being the home of progress that would attract Ukrainians from across the border.

⁶¹ Cf. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 252 on perceived “primitive religious beliefs” categorized as “precapitalist survivals.”

Furthermore, these beliefs and their manifestations were disturbing from the official point of view, because they could not be properly described in terms of class struggle. Only by ignoring earlier observations on the wide social reach of the miracle movements did ethnographers ultimately approach (and intellectually support) political agitation against a perceived kulak conspiracy.

All this fits into the development in early Soviet nationalities policy described by Terry Martin. Voluntarily or not,⁶² ethnographers separated “good” from “bad” folklore and thus promoted a conformist brand of folk art as an element of official representation of the Soviet empire in the 1930s.⁶³ They thus also promoted from within their discipline the establishment of an academic apparatus celebrating ideologically compatible expressions of ethnic diversity.⁶⁴ The diagnosis of influence through backward religious beliefs spreading from Right Bank to Left Bank Ukraine fits well into the reversal of the Piedmont concept in the 1930s. Border regions, formerly considered a place to exhibit the civilizational advantages of Soviet life to foreign eyes, were now suspected of helping subvert the Soviet Union from abroad.⁶⁵

After World War II the program to reunify Ukraine under Soviet rule, which had inspired the Piedmont concept, was realized. Soviet Ukrainian ethnography’s major task was now to register the formidable progress of Ukrainians even in remote places in abandoning backward tradition and adopting the Soviet lifestyle.⁶⁶ In doing so, ethnographers contributed to the invention of this Soviet lifestyle and thus to the creation of an identity that would rival national identity for a long time—in some areas of Ukraine, even after independence in 1991. The particular role of folklore studies in this context deserves further research. In order to improve our

⁶² Further research is needed to grasp the impact of political pressure, for instance, of the 1929 “attack on former imperial ethnographers” described by Hirsch (210), on Ukrainian folklore studies.

⁶³ On Maxim Gorky’s claiming in new Soviet folklore at the first congress of Soviet writers in 1934: Miller, *Folklore for Stalin*; Berezovs’kyi, *Ukraïns’ka radians’ka folklorystyka*, 19, 59, 125. On the official uses of folk art in 1935, 1936, and 1937: Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 437–440. On ethnographers’ direct role in “folklore production” since the mid-1930s: Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 269.

⁶⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 445.

⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 356.

⁶⁶ See, for example, I.F. Symonenko, *Sotsialistychni peretvorennia u pobuti trudiashchikh sela Neresnytsi Zakarpats’koi oblasti* [The socialist reconstruction of the working people’s way of life in the village of Neresnytsa in the Transcarpathian Region] (Kyiv, Vydavnytstvo Akademii Nauk URSR, 1957).

perspective on the Ukrainian case, it would also be worthwhile to study early Soviet ethnographic research on the folklore of other nationalities divided between the early Soviet Union and its neighbor states.

More research is needed in yet another respect. The observations made in this article fit well into Terry Martin's authoritative model of Soviet imperial logics. However, this model by definition cannot provide for a thorough contextualization of Ukrainian folklore studies in the 1920s and 1930s in the Soviet Union. Soviet studies on Ukrainian folklore were no isolated reservation of Russian imperial tradition and its Soviet counter-concepts. To fully explain their oscillating between praising Ukrainian folklore's bright sides and warning of its dark sides, one also needs an Eastern European perspective. Narratives of backwardness and the need to overcome it as referring to Ukrainians had also been created by Polish ethnography. At the time Ukraine was being invented as the Soviet Union's West, it had long since been invented as Poland's backward East.

Imagining a past Polish empire had been an important element in nineteenth-century Polish political discourse.⁶⁷ Ukraine played a major part in this political fiction, which also influenced the image of the Eastern territories (*kresy*) in post-World War I independent Poland.⁶⁸ While activists of the Ukrainian national movement in Galicia like Ivan Franko looked for ethnographic evidence of Ukrainian cultural independence, Polish ethnography dealt with the "backward" Eastern Slavs in terms of a Polish civilizing mission. Dealing with "backward" Eastern Slavs, Polish ethnographers were prone to enter into an outright contest with representatives of the Ukrainian (Ruthenian) national movement, as Patrice Dabrowski has demonstrated for Polish ethnography on the Hutsuls in the Carpathian Ukraine.⁶⁹ Polish ethnography elaborated formulas and metaphors both for a socially enlarged Polish nation and for a rising bourgeois society whose representatives had recourse to colonial motifs almost as much as representatives of the overseas colonizers in Western Europe did. While making use of such motifs established for the description of the colonized

⁶⁷ Andrzej Nowak and Roman Szporluk, "Była li Pol'sha imperiei?" [Was Poland an empire?], *Ab imperio* no. 1 (2007): 23–45.

⁶⁸ Angela Rustemeyer, "Erforschung des Volkes—Erfindung des Imperiums. Das Reich der polnischen Ethnographie vom Beginn der Neuzeit bis ins zwanzigste Jahrhundert" [Investigation of the people—invention of empire. The realm of Polish ethnography from the beginning of modern times until the twentieth century], in *Imperienvergleich* [Comparison of empires], eds. G. Hausmann and A. Rustemeyer, 51–76, esp. 72–74.

⁶⁹ Patrice Dabrowski, "'Discovering' the Galician Borderlands: The Case of the Eastern Carpathians," *Slavic Review* 64 (Summer 2005): 380–402.

Other, Polish ethnography also adopted concepts of progress and backwardness that sociology had worked out for “one’s own” society.⁷⁰ Sociologically inspired ethnography considered Catholicism, and the “Eastern” belief of the Eastern inhabitants, from the point of view of their compatibility with modernity and civic identity. A Polish sociologist interested in ethnography considered the militarization of society a solution to problems of identity in a multinational and multi-confessional state, thus envisaging one united patriotic peasant class in spite of the different religions.⁷¹ The voluminous early Soviet bibliography edited by Andriy Loboda shows that in the 1920s, studies published in the former Poland-Lithuania (and future Poland) made up a considerable part of the legacy of pre-1914 ethnographic studies on Ukrainians. This is also true for studies on popular spirituality, which, as we have seen, was a key topic for Soviet constructions of backwardness to be overcome by the socialist order.⁷² The reciprocal influence of Ukrainian folklore studies in (future) Poland and in Russia, respectively the early Soviet Union, needs closer examination. The Polish models for a multinational Poland were, of course, different in many respects from the Soviet ones for the Soviet state. Still, the way some Polish researchers dealing with Ukrainian ethnography supported the building of a modern society encourages us to consider the Soviet studies of Ukrainian religious folklore cited in this article in a broader context. Perhaps the late 1920s Soviet diagnoses of Ukrainian superstition, which helped to prepare the ground for massive intervention into society, were less of a specific Soviet phenomenon than one might think. To be sure, the Stalinist nationalities policy and violent reconstruction of peasant society in themselves are hardly comparable to anything else. But was the intellectual support they received from ethnography unique as well? The Polish example suggests that we carefully examine to what extent interwar-era folklore studies in Eastern Europe generally promoted concepts of social and nationality engineering.

⁷⁰ Rustemeyer, “Erforschung des Volkes,” 73.

⁷¹ Ibid., based on an idea from an unpublished work by Diana Siebert.

⁷² Andrievs’kyi’s bibliography mentions eighty-one works on witches (key word *vid’ma*), seventeen of which are from publishers in divided Poland-Lithuania. Ten of the thirty-three works on *demonologija* had been published there, as well as eighteen of the 148 works on “beliefs” (*povir’ia*) (Andrievs’kyi, *Bibliohrafiia*).

No Love Affair: Ingush and Chechen Imperial Ethnographies

Christian Dettmering

Introduction

The history of the Caucasus and its conquest is also a history of the mutual impact of ethnographic knowledge and politics in the Russian Empire. With the Caucasus an ethnically and linguistically highly complex region became part of the Russian Empire. And because of its ethnic and linguistic diversity, the Russian government felt compelled to analyze the region's ethnic complexity from the very beginning. So when Russia was on the verge of conquering the region in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg launched a number of expeditions into the Caucasus. These missions had the task of collecting data on topography, geological conditions, flora and fauna, and last but not least, the ethnicities and their cultures. With the escalating conflict and war, the North Caucasus was the most conflict-prone zone in the empire. The Russian leadership ascribed the conflict to religious hatred against Russians. As an obstacle to religious unity, the support of contemporary or presumably older segmented traditional social patterns became popular among the Russian leadership anywhere that Russia's statehood met Muslim resistance. Once more, ethnography became a tool to foster supposedly pre-Islamic traditions contradicting Islam. Such a strategy was employed throughout the empire until, beginning in the 1880s, national movements posed a new threat.¹ The same happened in the northeast Caucasus in the 1840s, after the most prominent resistance leader, Shamil

¹ Daniel Brower, "Islam and Ethnicity: Russian Colonial Policy in Turkestan," in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, eds. D.R. Brower and E.J. Lazzerini (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 123.

(1797–1871),² recovered from his first major defeat and the Russian army saw an urgent need for a thorough examination of the mountaineers' legal traditions. Customary law would serve as a barrier against Islamic legal ideas and institutions.³ Moreover, the segmented clan society would prohibit a united front of Muslim mountaineers against Russia. Therefore the mountaineers' administration (*Gorskoe upravlenie*) within the army was set up and started collecting data on these peoples. Later on the clans, one of the defining elements of traditional societies in the eyes of Russian observers, were themselves regarded as a danger to Russian statehood and were attacked and in turn ethnographically researched. Thus *shari'a* (Islamic law) and Muslim leaders, as well as clans and clan leaders, were considered a threat.⁴

Initial research on the ethnography of the peoples in Dagestan showed the impact of political considerations and ethnographic research topics and results. Thus Michael Kemper points out in his article “‘*Adat* against *Shari'a*”⁵ that the research on ‘*adat* [local customary law] was driven by the interest in which social groups could be conveniently incorporated into Russian structures⁶ and which (customary) laws would be helpful to repel *shari'a* in the local courts⁷ and thus reduce the influence of Muslim leaders. Using the Dagestan example, Bobrovnikov also showed how clans became viewed as a threat that needed to be fought, and how that was stressed by ethnographic analyses.⁸ The reverse impact, of how much the ethnographic studies had influenced political decisions, has been analyzed less, since most studies expect and find a self-enforcing system of political expectations. Although the policy makers see a need for ethnographic research, eventually this research rather rationalizes than questions politi-

² Imam Shamil was Russia's best-known enemy in the Northeast Caucasus. He led a war against the Russian advance from 1834 until 1859, and during the conflict he united the peoples who fought with him against Russia in a short-lived state.

³ V.O. Bobrovnikov, *Musul'mane Severnogo Kavkaza: Obychai, Pravo, Nasilie. Ocherki po Istorii i Etnografii Prava Nagornogo Dagestana* [The Muslims of the North Caucasus. Custom, law, violence. Sketches of the history and ethnography of the law of Upper Dagestan] (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2002), 148.

⁴ Bobrovnikov (2002), 148; Christian Dettmering, “Reassessing Chechen and Ingush (Vainakh) Clan Structures in the 19th Century,” *Central Asian Survey* no. 4 (2005): 477–482.

⁵ Michael Kemper, “‘*Adat* against’ *Šarī'a*: Russian Approaches towards Daghestani ‘Customary Law’ in the 19th Century,” *Ab Imperio* (2005), 147–174.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 155–156.

⁸ Bobrovnikov (2002), 284.

cal decisions. In cases where researchers' recommendations deviated from the political direction, it is found that their impact on political decisions was minor or non-existent.⁹ But we do not have a clear picture of to what extent ethnographic findings drove political decisions beyond the implementation and practical alteration of customary law in courts. For this question the Chechen and Ingush examples might be a good case study, since the Russian policy towards these peoples had different outcomes. Thus the Russian military command was able to establish a working relationship with the Ingush, while the Russian-Chechen relationship was always prone to conflicts.¹⁰ Although I argued in my previous research that the main driving force was the Islamicization of these peoples,¹¹ there could have been an ethnographic discussion on the treatment of these peoples, which had an impact on the further development of these very closely related peoples. This interaction between the political situation and the ethnographic findings can be examined with an analysis of the political development in the region and the rich ethnographic literature, which starts with the numerous travel accounts of Johann Anton von Güldenstadt (1745–1781), Jacob Reineggs (1744–1793), Julius von Klaproth (1783–1835) and others, comprises military research, and ends with numerous ethnographic journals published in the second half of the nineteenth century, such as the *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh* (SSKG) [Volume of testimonies on the Caucasian mountaineers], the *Terskii sbornik* [Terek anthology], the *Sbornik svedenii o Terskoi oblasti* [Volume of testimonies on the Terek oblast'] (SSTO) and others.

The Establishment of Ethnic Differences between Chechens and Ingush

The peoples between Dagestan and the Terek from east to west and from the Terek to the main range and even a little beyond from north to south all belong to the Vainakh family of ethnicities. They speak in closely related dialects and have similar social patterns as clan societies without an aristocracy, with the exception of three Chechen Terek villages, which

⁹ Cf. Kemper (2005), 149.

¹⁰ Cf. Chr. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis. Die Integration der Tschetschenen und Inguschen in das Russische Reich 1810–1880* [Russia's fight against Sufis. The integration of the Chechens and Ingush into the Russian Empire, 1810–1880] (Dryas: Oldenburg, gepr. Mannheim, 2011), 333–336.

¹¹ Dettmering (2011).

had princes. Whether there was a common identity of all of the Vainakhs north of the main range of the Caucasus or of bigger groups of these peoples at the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century can no longer be determined.¹² Most historians assume that there were two to four Vainakh peoples in the North Caucasus at the end of the nineteenth century: the Chechens, the Ingush, the Karabulaks, and the Kists.¹³ But neither exact linguistic nor social proofs of these divisions are available today. Any attempt to prove common political institutions of the Chechens or these groups together is not convincing.¹⁴ And at the beginning of the twentieth century, we have reports that the Vainakhs identify themselves exclusively with their villages.

For travelers of the eighteenth century, the division that today is made between Chechens and Ingush and probably Karabulaks, who are located at the mouth of the Assa River in the north of the region, and Kists high up in the mountains, was not obvious. So Güldenstädt, who traveled on behalf of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg to the Caucasus in 1770–1773, did not distinguish between Chechens and Ingush, whom he called “Kists.”¹⁵ But significant changes took place when Sheikh Mansur became a popular Muslim resistance leader against the Russians in the North Caucasus, uniting the Chechens and most neighboring Muslim tribes against the Russian army in 1785. Mansur himself was a Chechen from the village of Aldy, which was located near the Terek River, close to what would later become the city of Grozny. He became famous because he was able to organize a couple of early victories against the better-armed Russian army and thus spread the war across the whole North Caucasus. In the ongoing war he even

¹² Cf. Christian Dettmering, “The Russian Impact on the Formation of National Identity Among Chechens and Ingush, 1780–1870,” in *Defining Self: Essays on Emergent Identities in Russia; Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. M. Branch (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2009), 583–585.

¹³ Cf. S.M. Bronevskii, “Glava Tretia: 1. Kisty” [Third chapter. 1. Kists], in *Ingushi. Sbornik statei i ocherkov po istorii i kul'ture ingushskogo naroda* [The Ingush. Collection and sketches to the history and culture of the Ingush people], ed. A. Kh. Tankiev (Saratov: Detskaia Kniga, 1996), 128–138; J.Z. Akhmadov, “Karabulaki (Arshtkhoitsy)” [Karabulaks (Arshtkhoits)], in *Chechentsy: Istorija i sovremennost'* [The Chechens. History and current state of affairs], ed. I.A. Aidaev (Groznyj: Mir tvoemu domu, 1996), 208–209.

¹⁴ Cf. Dettmering (2011), 142–146.

¹⁵ J.A. Güldenstädt, *Reise durch Rußland und im Kaukasischen Gebirge (1770–1771)* [Journey through Russia and in the Caucasian Mountains (1770–1771)] (St. Petersburg: Kayserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1787), 477–478.

looked for support from the Ottoman Empire, which still had some outposts at the North Caucasian coastline of the Black Sea. Only in 1792 was his resistance subdued. This fierce resistance led to a significant change in the future perception of ethnic borders. Mansur's resistance worried the Russians, not only because of his early successes but also because of his use of Islam as an ideology for resistance. Islam could not only unite most North Caucasian people against Russia but could also serve as an instrument to gain support from neighboring Muslim states such as the Ottoman Empire (and Persia). As a consequence, travelers like Jacob Reineggs and Julius von Klaproth, who visited the region after the Mansur insurgece, accurately distinguished between Chechen and Ingush. This was due to the fact that at that time (the beginning of the nineteenth century) the majority of Ingush were still not Muslims. Sometimes Karabulaks, who were located between Chechens and Ingush, and Kists, who lived in the higher mountains along the Chanti-Argun River and the Armkhi, were described as ethnicities different from the Chechens and Ingush. We cannot say to what degree this analysis was influenced by military perceptions of the situation or whether they had a major impact on the military perception, but with these ethnographic findings, the ground was laid for differing analyses of Chechens and Ingush and for different treatment of these peoples, either by political arbitrariness or based on diverging ethnographic analysis.

The Mountaineers' Threat to Russian Civilization

Now ethnographers were not only able to distinguish between Chechens and Ingush by religion, but also describe real or imagined cultural, social, and political differences. In the context of this study, a limitation to differences in the description of mountaineers as a threat to Russians, differences in the social structure, meaning princes, revered leaders, and clan structures, and the legal framework, meaning *shari'a* and *'adat*, is sufficient and covers, besides folklore (names, weddings, funerals, etc.), most of the topics that ethnographers were interested in at that time.

The first and foremost concern was the robberies of mountaineers. Robberies were an integral part of life in the Caucasus and affected not only Russians but all people in this region. The reason is that in all North Caucasian mountaineers' societies the male youth assembled in groups or unions, which were formed according to well defined local customs and where the youth had to prove their bravery by raiding neighbors according

to certain rules.¹⁶ These rules would have limited the violence of any raid. Since this was a common (North) Caucasian tradition in which even Cossacks participated, there were probably not huge differences between the Caucasian peoples in the cruelty and fierceness of the attacks. But it should be noted that these robberies, performed in a hit-and-run style, influenced conduct in times of war and thus were also successfully deployed by leaders like Mansur against the technically and numerically superior Russian army.¹⁷ No ethnographer ever seemed to distinguish between traditional robberies and the robbery tactics of the war. At least no distinction can be found in the known sources. Nevertheless, ethnographers and military officials alike started to distinguish between Chechens and Ingush in terms of robbery. So Reineggs and Klaproth refer to the Chechens as “fierce robbers” or the “biggest robbers of the Caucasus,” who posed the biggest threat on the Georgian Military Road.¹⁸ And Lieutenant General Karl Fedorovich Knorring (1744–1820/1801–1802) calls the Chechens particularly dangerous with a direct reference to the Mansur War.¹⁹ General Aleksei Ermolov (1777–1861/1816–1827), the most influential general and commander-in-chief in the Caucasus until Mikhail Semenovitch Vorontsov (1782–1856/1844–1853), considered the Chechens, too, to be fierce robbers.²⁰

But the Ingush exemplify the good alternative. The Russian traveler Vladimir Bogdanovich Bronevskii (1784–1835) declared the Ingush even to be an exception to the rule that the mountaineers were robbers: “The Ingush are less prone to robbery or have fewer opportunities. They are considered benign and mild-mannered.”²¹ Ermolov obviously shares this

¹⁶ A.S. Mirzoev, “Naezdnichestvo kak Traditsionnyi Adygskaa Obshchestvennyi Institut” [Mounted raids as a traditional institution of Adyge society], *Étnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 1 (2002): 94–102; Bobrovnikov (2002), 31.

¹⁷ Cf. Clemens P. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus* [Jihad in the Caucasus] (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2007), 45–47.

¹⁸ Cf. Jacob C.M. Reineggs, *Allgemeine historisch-topographische Beschreibung des Kaukasus, Band 1* [General historical-topographical description of the Caucasus, vol. 1] (Gotha, Hildesheim, and St. Petersburg: Gerstenberg und Dittmar, 1796), 36–40.

¹⁹ A.P. Berzhe, ed., *Akty Sobrannye Kavkazskoiu Arkheograficheskoiu Kommissiei* (AKAK), vol. 1 [Documents collected by the Caucasian Archeological Commission (AKAK)] (Tiflis: Arkhiv Glavnogo upravleniia namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1866), 715–716.

²⁰ V.G. Gadzhiev and C.C. Ramzanov, *Dvizhenie Gortsev Severo-Vostochnogo Kavkaza v 20–50 gg. XIX veka—Sbornik dokumentov* [The movement of the mountaineers of the Northeastern Caucasus in the 1820s to 1850s. A collection of documents] (Makhachkala: Dagknigoizdat, 1959), 24.

²¹ Cf. S.M. Bronevskii, “Glava Tretia: 1. Kisty” [Third chapter. 1. Kists], in *Ingushi. Sbornik statei i ocherkov po istorii i kul'ture ingushskogo naroda* [The Ingush. Collec-

view. He calls the Ingush “our”²² and “benign.”²³ For Ermolov such words are quite uncommon. Travelers like Klaproth have to admit that the Ingush, too, add significantly to the dangers of a journey along the Georgian Military Road.²⁴ While a statistical assessment is impossible, because many sources that report robberies simply refer to Asians or mountaineers, because of local traditions it is unlikely that Ingush committed fewer robberies than Chechen per capita. But the Ingush were not related to Islam and the Mansur conflict. And so their attacks seemed less threatening. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Chechen historian Umalat Laudaev (1830?–1890?) even claimed that the Chechens started the robberies only after they adopted Islam.²⁵ These assessments obviously encouraged harsher punishments of the Chechens for raids, while the Ingush were not punished to the same extent. Whether the analysis of the raids and the raiders had an impact on policies towards them is not entirely clear. While most ethnographers limited themselves to superficial descriptions of “fierce robbers,” evidence of the social structures on which the raiders relied are scarce, at least for the Chechens and Ingush. One of these exceptions is Reineggs, who gave some early descriptions of the armed Chechen youth unions that organized these raids.²⁶ Bobrovnikov at least assumes that the militias that were established at that time would serve as a sublimation of the raid system of the mountaineers.²⁷ While this is a possible explanation and might derive from the ethnographic research, the structures and results were different. The Chechen militias were drawn from the entire population of a village under Russian sovereignty, not only from the youth. And even more important, the rules concerning the traditional raids, designed to prevent avoid blood feuds, did not apply. On the

tion and sketches of the history and culture of the Ingush people], ed. A.Kh. Tankiev (Saratov: Detskaia Kniga, 1996), 132; S.M. Bronevskii, *Noveishie Geograficheskie i Istorieskie Izvestiia o Kavkaze: Izvlech. Po tsentral'nomu i Severo-Zapadnomu Kavkazu* [Latest geographical and historical news about the Caucasus. Extracted from the Central and Northwestern Caucasus] (Nal'chik: El'fa, 1999), 8.

²² AKAK 6 (1875), no. 2, 506.

²³ Ibid., 501.

²⁴ H.J. Klaproth, *Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien, unternommen in den Jahren 1807 und 1808, Band 1* [Journey into the Caucasus and to Georgia in 1807 and 1808, vol. 1] (Halle, Berlin: Hallisches Waisenhaus, 1812), 615–626.

²⁵ U. Laudaev, “Chechenskoe Plemia” [The Chechen tribe], in *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh* (SSKG) [Volume of testimonies about the Caucasian mountaineers] (Tiflis: Tipografiia Glavnogo Upravleniia namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1872), 20.

²⁶ Reineggs (1796), vol. 1, 45.

²⁷ Bobrovnikov (2002), 22–23, 49.

contrary the Russian military command hoped to provoke blood feuds. The idea was that Chechen militia raids would cause relatives of the victims to seek revenge, making the subdued Chechens even more dependent on the Russians. Thus the main link between the traditional raiders and the militia consisted of the idea that the militia acted as robbers. But this time the raid did not serve to demonstrate the participants' bravery but to finance the militia, which received no funding from Russia.²⁸ Interestingly, the focus on sowing hatred among the Chechens was so strong that the Ingush militia at that time played a minor role. So Russian policy to some extent really might have caused a reduction in Ingush participation in raids.

During the Caucasian War, particularly after the resurgence of Shamil in 1840, more projects were discussed and launched to harness the youth of the Chechens and Ingush for Russian purposes. In these projects the youth was directly addressed, since military experience, but also ethnographic research, which was reinforced at that time and now conducted by the army and its newly founded mountaineers' administration, pointed to the youth as the most troubling part of the mountaineers' and particularly Chechen society. At that time the original youth formations might already have transformed into a violent "party of people discontent with Russian rule," as N.F. Grabovskii later put it,²⁹ because of their decades-long prosecution as criminals by the Russian state. The most ambitious project at that time was introducing a North Caucasian administration for the indigenous peoples, where General Paul Grabbe, the commander of the left wing of the Caucasus line³⁰—, asked for the inclusion of "Nukers", as he called the armed guards with a common term of that time for the Caucasus into the project, in which Chechen youth could serve as a paid police guard. This idea met with strong resistance from the tsar and was never realized. Other military formations for the Caucasian peoples were not as tailored to include Chechens.³¹ One further attempt was made to harness the youth for the purposes of the Russian Empire: in 1857 the Chechen administration issued a rule permitting Chechen youth to go on raids if the

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ N.F. Grabovskii, "Ingushi. Ikh zhizn' i obychai" [The Ingush. Their life and customs], in *SSKG* 9 (1876), 17.

³⁰ The Caucasus line was a fortified border, that divided the steppes north of the Caucasus from the unruly mountaineers. The left wing of this line was the part facing the Chechens.

³¹ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennii voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv (RGVIA) [Russian State Archive for Military History], October 31, 1842, f. 38, op. 7, d. 68, ll 13–25.

raids were directed against the Shamil state and registered with the authorities in advance.³² Besides that, a permanent militia of the *na'ibs* (regional rulers) was created, which, together with the function of the *na'ib* itself, was derived from the Shamil state.³³ The other ideas might have relied instead on ethnographic studies. But what all had in common was that their sole purpose was to subdue the Shamil state. Once this was achieved, the interest in harnessing the youth formations for state purposes ceased. The youth formations were seen once more as Caucasian robbers and incriminated and isolated. As a result, they actually transformed into the robbers that the Russian state had regarded them as all along.³⁴

Interestingly, there was no particular policy to integrate the Ingush youth into Russian service and to use the traditional raids of the youth in the Caucasian war, although an Ingush militia was formed and was the more often deployed the longer the war lasted. Only an Ingush militia became in the years of the Caucasian War more important. Even the adoption of Islam by the majority of the Ingush in the 1830s³⁵ neither changed the attitude towards the Ingush significantly nor changed the policies towards the youth formations. And the Ingush did not join the Shamil state, notwithstanding their shared religious beliefs.³⁶

³² RGVIA, 1857, f. 14719, op. 3, d. 550.

³³ Cf. V.V. Lapin, "Natsional'nye formirovaniia v Kavkazskoi voine" [National formations in the Caucasian War], in *Rossia i Kavkaz skvoz' dva stoletii* [Russia and the Caucasus during two centuries], eds. G.G. Lisitsyna and I.A. Gordin (St. Petersburg: Zvezda, 2001), 12, 109–125; È.D. Muzhukhoeva, "Organizatsiia upravleniia Checheno-Ingushetii v 40–60 gg. XIX veka" [The organization of the Chechen-Ingush administration from the 1840s to the 1860s], in *Obshchestvennye otnosheniia u chechentsev i ingushei v dorevoliutsionnom proshlom (XIII–nachalo XX v.)* [Social relations among the Chechen and Ingush societies in the time before the Russian Revolution (thirteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century)] (Groznyi: Checheno-Ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1982), 77.

³⁴ Cf. Bobrovnikov (2002), 41.

³⁵ AKAK 3 (1869), 215; A.N. Genko, "Iz kul'turnogo proshlogo ingushei" [From the cultural past of the Ingush], in *Ingushi. Sbornik statei i ocherkov po istorii i kul'ture ingushskogo naroda* [The Ingush. Collection and sketches on the history and culture of the Ingush people], ed. A.Kh. Tankiev (Saratov: Detskaia kniga, 1996), 502; AKAK 4 (1870), 894–896; Reineggs (1796), vol. 1, 48–49; B.K. Dalgat, "Pervobytnaia religiia chechentsev" [The original religion of the Chechens], *Terskii sbornik* 3 (1893): 53.

³⁶ AKAK 8 (1881), 704–708; Genko, (1996), 503–504.

Attempts of Social Integration of the Vainakh Peoples

While the studies of the raids and youth formations were never a central part of the ethnographic studies of the nineteenth century, these studies focused on the social structure, particularly the description of elites and *'adat*, the non-*shari'a* law. As Kemper has shown in the case of the elites, the Russians expected to encounter a society similar to their own and wanted to find partners for cooperation.³⁷ This idea was wrong even for the Dagestan lowlands where princes existed, but without the power of European princes. Among the Chechens and Ingush, princes could not be found except in three Chechen villages along the Terek River. The early ethnographers pointed out that the Chechens and Ingush had no princes and no aristocracy, and this fact was known to the military command of Russia too. In terms of co-optation policies towards the indigenous peoples, the Russian administration looked for people in positions, which they could compare to Russian functions, e.g., the princes of Daghestan were considered nobles in the Russian understanding too. And only people in such positions comparable to Russian ones according to the Russian perception could be co-opted into the according Russian position. This limitation obviously driven by Russian class consciousness left the Russian military little choice concerning the leaders they could co-opt. Islamic leaders were usually ruled out because of the fear of Islam. The other group, which the Russian administration deemed suitable for co-optation, was the elders of the villages. This was already practiced since at least the eighteenth century. But since the influence of the elders in these societies was far more limited than the Russian military assumed or hoped, no long-term rule could be achieved. In the nineteenth century this led to the tendency in politics, particularly among the Chechens, to levy ever more duties of control and responsibility for their societies on the elders. While ethnographers like Butkov³⁸ already accurately hinted that the elders had the function of judges rather than of political leaders and administration officials, they were increasingly treated as administration officials. And when they lost their influence among the Chechens because of their control functions, which damaged their popularity and authority,³⁹ they be-

³⁷ Kemper (2005), 152.

³⁸ P.G. Butkov, "Iz arkhivnykh materialov P. G. Butkova" [From the archival materials of P.G. Butkov], in *Rossii i Kavkaz skvoz' dva stoletii* [Russia and the Caucasus through two centuries], eds. G.G. Lisitsyna and I.A. Gordin (St. Petersburg: Zvezda, 2001), 5–7.

³⁹ Dettmering (2011), 253–256.

came appointed officials of the state, undermining the old system of the selection of elders entirely. On the other hand, the Russian understanding of the Chechens as a society without an aristocracy compelled them to create a sort of new aristocracy in Chechnya. The foremost candidate for such a position was the Chechen leader Beybulat (?–1831; active in raids since 1802), who obviously sought a position similar to the Kumyk princes in Chechnya and could rally significant popular support behind him. But as the Russian administration never handed out high officer or general titles to elders as non-aristocrats, they were not ready to accept the initiative of a commoner to become a new prince, although Beybulat's ideas in negotiations with Grekov, the commander of the left wing of the Caucasus line at this time, hinted in that direction.⁴⁰ Thus they alienated Beybulat, who united with Muslim leaders to fight Russian sovereignty in Chechnya.⁴¹ Although we do not know whether Beybulat, as a kind of prince, retained his popularity with the Chechens, we can assess that ethnographic knowledge froze the image of the society in a particular state, rather than enhancing serious social changes. That is all the more surprising, since ethnography should always have served to manipulate the society to become closer to Russian society. But the idea of manipulating the society through ethnographic studies and changes to the situation was obviously limited to a very narrow range of influence and only to existing institutes, which were described ethnographically, and Russian class consciousness might have hindered bolder steps. Thus the attempt to manipulate native institutions was eventually detrimental to Russian interests, since old institutions were destroyed and became obsolete, while a lack of imagination hindered the creation of new ones.

While we witness a deterioration of Chechen institutions, although they were studied in significant campaigns since the 1840s, we also see the preservation and functioning of Ingush institutions. The Ingush started from much the same point, having only elders as judges, but without Islamic elites. And unlike the Chechen example, the functions of elders were preserved. The Russian approach did not differ significantly from the one chosen in Chechnya, but since there was no major conflict with the Ingush, the elders were able to serve as a point of contact between the Ingush societies and the Russian administration, as was mentioned well into the nineteenth century.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid., 189–190.

⁴¹ Ibid., 190–192.

⁴² Cf. Grabovskii (1876), 42.

The Traditional Clan as a Threat

In the mid-nineteenth century, the opportunities for integration policies broadened for a society without an aristocracy because the concept of citizenship (*grazhdanstvennost'*) became popular and took hold in the policies. Although Austin Jersild had documented the cruel outcomes of this concept in the Chechen and Ossetian communities,⁴³ it could have opened the field for new integration concepts beyond the co-optation of an aristocracy that did not exist. And ethnographers developed some ideas on how to foster integration beyond old concepts of co-optation. Because the deportations, which were studied by Jersild and others, had the greater impact, they should be addressed here first. Given that the deportation of a significant part of the Chechen societies to the Ottoman Empire is the most striking part of the policy of deportations of Caucasian peoples, it can be assumed that they were connected to the fight against Islamic elites. In Chechnya they followed the Shali affair in 1864, which was interpreted as a fanatic Muslim protest against Russian power. In fact it seems to have been a peaceful protest against the arrest of one popular Sufi leader—Kunta Hajji—which turned violent because of a harsh Russian reaction.⁴⁴ Consequently the deportations targeted the Muslim elite, to deprive Chechen society of its leadership.⁴⁵ Ethnographic knowledge did not play a significant role in these deportations; its only role was to retain people who were considered crucial for the peaceful development of the

⁴³ Cf. Austin L. Jersild, "From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire," in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, eds. D.R. Brower and E.J. Lazzerini (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 101–114, 103–104.

⁴⁴ Cf. M. Gammer, "The Qadiriyya in the Northern Caucasus," *Journal of the History of Sufism* 1 (2000): 1.

⁴⁵ T.T. Mal'sagova, *Vosstanie Gortsev v chechne v 1877 godu* [The uprising of the mountaineers in Chechnya in 1877] (Groznyi: Checheno-Ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1968), 7–9, 5; A.P. Ippolitov, "Uchenie Zikr i Ego Posledovateli v Chechne i Argunskom Okruge Obriady i ucheniia etogo ordena" [The teachings of Zikr and its disciples in Chechnya and the Argun Administrative District. Customs and teachings of this order], in *SSKG* 2 (1869) 16; Mikhail Nikolaevich to D.A. Miliutin, RGVIA; f. 38, op. 7, ed. chr. 493, ll. 72–73; Mal'sagova (1968), 12; M. Bennigsen Broxup and A. Avtorkhanov, "The Last Ghazawat: The 1920–1921 Uprising," in *The North-Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance Towards the Muslim World*, eds. M. Bennigsen Broxup and A. Avtorkhanov (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1992), 117–118; Jersild (1997), 103–104; Ėsadze (1907), vol. 1, 462–463; Mikhail Nikolaevich to D.A. Miliutin, No. 91, September 8, 1865, RGVIA f. 38, op. 7, 493, ll. 71–73ob.

region.⁴⁶ Eventually 20 percent of the Chechen population was deported. But the deportations had a lesser-known counterpart, the resettlements within the territory. While “dangerous” Muslims were to be deported to the Muslim Ottoman Empire, the “dangerous” clan structures, which became of interest since the 1840s in ethnographic research, were seen as a different problem and got a different treatment. The clans were considered unruly, and plans were made to break them up and thus to make the individuals directly responsible to the state, as the citizenship idea suggested.⁴⁷ This should be achieved by resettling the Chechens into big easy controllable villages in the plains and by deliberately separating clan members from each other.⁴⁸ The old villages were destroyed and the hay burned.⁴⁹ The aim of destroying the clan structures by the resettlements was probably achieved. At least the maximal lineages (essentially extended families that previously settled collectively)⁵⁰ were dispersed, and property conflicts within the maximal lineages emerged that were previously unimaginable because of common possessions.⁵¹ The size of families living together decreased noticeably.⁵²

⁴⁶ Ibragimova (2002), 94; Mikhail Nikolaevich to D.A. Miliutin, No. 91, September 8, 1865, RGVIA f. 38, op. 7, 493, ll. 71–73ob.

⁴⁷ J.F. Baddeley, *The Rugged Flanks of the Caucasus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), vol. 1, 226–227; Fadeev (1871), 73; Anonymous, “O Polozhenii na Kavkaze” [On the situation in the Caucasus], 1864, RGVIA, f. 38, op. 7, d. 470, ll. 1–14.

⁴⁸ Ibragimova (2002), 74; Ėsadze (1907), vol. 1, 48.

⁴⁹ Ibragimova (2002), 77–78; Fadeev (1871), 249–252; M. Bennigsen Broxup and A. Avtorkhanov (1992), 118; Jersild (1997), 104; A. Avtorkhanov, “The Chechen and Ingush during the Soviet Period and its Antecedents,” in *The North–Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance Towards the Muslim World*, eds. M. Bennigsen Broxup and A. Avtorkhanov (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1992), 15; V.G. Jabagi, “Revolution and Civil War in the North Caucasus: End of the 19th–Beginning of the 20th Century,” *Central Asian Survey* no. 1/2 (1991): 119–120; Mal’sagova (1968), 7–9.

⁵⁰ Dettmering (2005), 476.

⁵¹ N.S. Ivanenkov, “Gornye chechentsy. Kul’turno–Ėkonomicheskoe Issledovanie chechenskogo Raiona Nagornoj Polosy Terskoi Oblasti” [The mountain Chechens. A cultural-economic investigation of the Chechen territory of the mountainous region of the Terek oblast], *Terskii Sbornik. Literaturno–Nauchnoe Prilozhenie k “Terskomu Kalendariu” 1911* [Terek anthology. Literary-scientific supplement to the Terek calendar] 7 (1910): 51–52; Dettmering (2005), 476.

⁵² E.D. Maksimov, “Chechentsy. Istoriko–Geograficheskii i Statistiko–Ėkonomicheskii Ocherk” [The Chechens. A historical-geographic and statistical-economic sketch], *Terskii Sbornik* 3 (1893): 32–33; N.F. Grabovskii, “Ėkonomicheskii i Domashnii Byt zhitelei Gorskogo Uchastka Ingushevskogo Okruga” [Economic and domestic life of the inhabitants of the mountain county of the Ingushetian District], *SSKG* 3 (1870), 7.

Significantly, the Ingush were not included in the deportations to the Ottoman Empire, because the military administration did not want them to leave the Russian Empire. Some Ingush left, but the numbers are insignificant.⁵³ But the Russians forced the internal resettlement of the Ingush despite their relatively good relations with them. We do not know whether the resettlement was conducted in a less dramatic way than in Chechnya, but we know that some Ingush supported it, obviously in the hope of gaining better arable land.⁵⁴ Other Ingush protested vehemently against the resettlement—most likely those who had to give up this arable land—but in general the resettlement was enacted quite peacefully. Thus far we have not found testimonies that Chechens were as eager to resettle as some of the Ingush were. But as a result of the resettlements the Chechen situation remained as unstable as ever, while the Ingush situation did not deteriorate. The ethnographers had obviously exaggerated the influence of clans on the Chechen societies and underestimated the role of the villages as political entities of these societies. Thus the supposed destruction of the clan as political entity could not bring about the desired results. Thus the direct interaction between the Russian state and the Chechens did not improve as desired. And the interaction with the Ingush elders was surprisingly little affected. But instead of correcting the role of the clan in ethnography, ethnographers now became obsessed with the clan as some intangible and therefore even more frightening threat.⁵⁵ At the end of the nineteenth century, in his report on the Chechens, Evgenii Dmitrievich Maksimov (1858–1927) judged: “The clan or clan union [...] is an order, within which each member without oath or contract [...], serves unselfishly the interest of the whole [...]. This [...] continues today, although each clan is dispersed throughout hundreds of villages and societies today. The village is, in the eyes of a Chechen, nothing more than a collection of households [...]”⁵⁶

Since the ethnographers were pursuing a chimera, they could not give an accurate analysis of the essence of a clan. So the ethnographic works

⁵³ Cf. RG VIA, 1865, f. 38, op. 7, d. 493, ll. 71–73ob; “Imennoi spisok pereselentsev nazranovskogo obshchestva v Turtsii s semeistvami” [List of names of the migrants of the Nazran’ society to Turkey with their families], in *Ingushetiia i Ingushi* [Ingushetia and the Ingush], volume 1, eds. M. Iandieva and A. Mal’sagova (Nazran’ and Moscow: Ingushskii Memorial, 1999), pp. 380–381.

⁵⁴ Cf. Dettmering (2011), 270–271.

⁵⁵ E. Sokirianskaia, “Families and Clans in Ingushetia and Chechnya: A Fieldwork Report,” *Central Asian Survey*, no. 4 (2005): 453.

⁵⁶ Maksimov (1893), 37.

on clans were limited to the collection of genealogies, which some researchers in the late nineteenth century undertook. Among the collectors of Chechen and Ingush genealogies were I.M. Popov in Ichkeria, Chakh Akhriev (1850–1914) in Ingushetia, P.A. Golovinskii in the central region, and N.S. Ivanenkov in the western mountains.⁵⁷ But these genealogies represent mere collections of ancestors. The researchers did not even attempt to compare them, which would have led to inconsistencies with the same clan having different genealogies, which in turn would have required new explanations of the clan phenomenon. No new attempts were ever undertaken to solve this perceived problem, and ethnographers who tried to analyze these descriptions, as Maksim Maksimovich Kovalevskii (1851–1916) did,⁵⁸ now tried to reconstruct a primordial society that existed before. So the citizenship concept of that time had a huge impact on the clans, whose maximal lineages actually dissolved into intangible groups while they settled together previously, but did not help Russian interests. Thus the cooperation of politics with ethnographic studies of that time could not help improving the relations. At best, it did not make relations worse, as the Ingush example vividly showed.

Language Politics

A second impact of the citizenship concept was a discussion on language policies after the victory over Shamil in 1859, a victory ascribed mostly to the deforestation of Chechnya, war fatigue and the dispatching of more military forces.⁵⁹ But after the victory, journals like *Voennyj Sbornik* and

⁵⁷ I.M. Popov, "Ichkeriia. Istoriko-topograficheskii ocherk" [Ichkeria. Historical-topographical sketch], in *SSKG* 4 (1870), 9–10; P.A. Golovinskii, "Zametki o Chechne i Chechentsakh" [Notes on Chechnya and the Chechens], in *Sbornik svedenii o Terskoi Oblasti (SSTO)* no. 1 (1878): 243; Ch. Akhriev, "Ingushi (ich predaniia, verovaniia, pover'ia)" [The Ingush (their legends, beliefs, faith)], in *SSKG* no. 8 (1875): 1, Ivanenkov (1910), 10–12.

⁵⁸ M.M. Kovalevskii, *Rodovyi Byt v Nastoiashchem, Nedavnom i Otdalennom Proshlom. Opyt v Oblasti Sravnitel'noi Etnografii i Istorii Prava* [Family life in the present, the recent and the bygone past. Attempts in the field of comparative ethnography and the history of law] (St. Petersburg: Brokgauz-Efron, 1911), passim.

⁵⁹ Cf. J.F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1908; Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999), 401; M. Gammer, "Russian Strategies in the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan" in *The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance Towards the Muslim World*, ed. M. Bennigsen-Broxup (London: C. Hurst, 1992), 175–176; M. Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar, Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London: Cass, 1994), 277–291; Sidorko (2007), 423–427.

Russkij Vestnik pondered how to civilize the Caucasian mountaineers.⁶⁰ Most often trade and education were seen as the forces that would civilize Chechnya and turn it into a promising province of the empire.⁶¹ Even a penchant for European culture, namely Mozart and Bellini, was apparently discovered.⁶² In the realm of education, the promotion of local languages became an important topic. And ethnographers were the leading force in this discussion. Already in 1852, still under Vorontsov, the KOIRGO, which Adolphe Bergé (1828–1886) led, decided to foster local languages and devised the creation of dictionaries and the development of alphabets. While some dictionaries were assembled, alphabets were not created until Petr Karlovich Uslar (1816–1875) took on the task.⁶³ Uslar, a linguist of Baltic German descent in the military service, developed seven alphabets for various North and South Caucasian languages, including Chechen. His seven alphabets were published posthumously.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ S. Ivanov, “O Sblizhenii Gortsev s Russkimi na Kavkaze” [On the Rapprochement of the mountaineers with the Russians in the Caucasus], *Voennyi Sbornik* 7 (1859): 542.

⁶¹ V.K., “Neskol’ko Slovo o Budushchei Deiatel’nosti Nashei na Kavkaze” [Some words on our future activity in the Caucasus], in *Kavkaz i Rossiiskaia Imperiia: Proekty, Idei i Real’nost’* [The Caucasus and the Russian Empire. Projects, ideas, and reality], eds. J.A. Gordin, V.V. Lapin, G.G. Lisitsyna, and B.P. Milovidov (St. Petersburg: Zvezda, 2005), 602–617 [originally published in *Voennyi Sbornik* (1860)].

⁶² A.V., “Pokorenie Kavkaza” [The conquest of the Caucasus], *Russkij Vestnik* [Russian messenger] 27 (1860): 368.

⁶³ P.K. Uslar, *Ėtnografiia Kavkaza. Iazykoznanie* [The ethnography of the Caucasus. Knowledge of the languages], vol. 2: *Chechenskii iazyk* [Chechen language] (Tiflis: Tipografija kantselarii Glavnonachal’stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chast’iu na Kavkaze, 1888), 10.

⁶⁴ P.K. Uslar, *Ėtnografiia Kavkaza. Iazykoznanie* [The ethnography of the Caucasus. Knowledge of the languages], vol. 1: *Abkhazskii Jazyk* [Abkhaz language] (Tiflis: Tipografija kantselarii Glavnonachal’stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chast’iu na Kavkaze, 1887); Uslar (1888); P.K. Uslar, *Ėtnografiia Kavkaza. Iazykoznanie* [The ethnography of the Caucasus. Knowledge of the languages], vol. 3: *Avarskii Iazyk* [Avar language] (Tiflis: Tipografija kantselarii Glavnonachal’stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chast’iu na Kavkaze, 1889); P.K. Uslar, *Ėtnografiia Kavkaza. Iazykoznanie* [The ethnography of the Caucasus. Knowledge of the languages], vol. 4: *Lakskii Iazyk* [Lak language] (Tiflis: Tipografija kantselarii Glavnonachal’stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chast’iu na Kavkaze, 1890); P.K. Uslar, *Ėtnografiia Kavkaza. Iazykoznanie* [The ethnography of the Caucasus. Knowledge of the languages], vol. 5: *Khiurkilinskii Jazyk* [Khiurkil language] (Tiflis: Tipografija kantselarii Glavnonachal’stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chast’iu na Kavkaze, 1892); P.K. Uslar, *Ėtnografiia Kavkaza. Iazykoznanie* [The ethnography of the Caucasus. Knowledge of the languages], vol. 6: *Kiurinskii Iazyk* [Kiurin language] (Tiflis: Tipografija kantselarii Glavnonachal’stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chast’iu na Kavkaze, 1896); P.K. Uslar, *Ėtnografiia Kavkaza. Iazykoznanie* [The ethnography of the

In his communications, particularly with Adolphe Bergé, Uslar points out what could be achieved by introducing individual alphabets for each language. The main aim he expresses is the fight against Islam. This is in line with the strategies during the Caucasian War. But now it reappears in a form of a fight against the Arabic language. He argues in an article: "As a consequence of the political changes, now the task arises to shift the civilizing epicenter and to eliminate the influence of a hostile civilization. [...] If the language of the other civilization is foreign to the people, it is easier to fight the language. And it is easiest to take control of the minds where the people stood/were only slightly under the influence of some weak civilization, or the civilization is not hostile to us."⁶⁵

Although he is clearly pointing to Islam and Arabic culture, he tries to explain it in abstract terms. Unfortunately he does not indicate whether he considered the Chechens as only slightly under the influence of a foreign civilization, as his predecessors often did. But given previous experience, he might have seen Chechnya as an example here. Further evidence for this might be that, when he actually mentions the Arabic language, he explicitly mentions Dagestan: "The Arabic language comprises in itself all the hostile elements in Dagestan."⁶⁶ But the Arabic language was clearly seen as a threat to stability in Chechnya. So Ivan von Barthomoläi (1813–1870), an aristocrat with a German-Italian pedigree but a Circassian mother, who served in the army and was the head of the Chechen administration in the 1850s, published stories in his *Chechen Bukvar* [Chechen Primer], which, in competition with Uslar, was intended to help teach Chechens to write and understand their own language. The stories published in the Chechen Primer made it very clear, that Bartholomäi saw the popular knowledge of Chechen writing as a way to break free of Islamic influence. In a fictional story a Chechen father advises his son to attend a school so that he does not have to depend on mullahs, the Islamic scholar, for documents.⁶⁷

This hostility towards the Arabic language was shared by the administration. So the viceroy Grand Prince Mikhail Nikolaevich (1832–1909) declined to follow the recommendation of a translator in the Ministry of

Caucasus. Knowledge of the languages], vol. 7: *Tabasarsanskii Iazyk* [Tabasaran language] (Tbilisi: Izd. Mecniereba, 1979).

⁶⁵ P.K. Uslar, "O Rasprostranении Gramotnosti Mezhdū Gortsami" [On the dissemination of the ability to read and write among the mountaineers], *SSKG*, no. 3 (1870): 3.

⁶⁶ Uslar (1870), 4.

⁶⁷ I.A. Bartolomej, *Chechenskij Bukvar* [Chechen primer] (Tiflis: Tipografija Glavnogo upravleniia Namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1866), 9–12.

Foreign Affairs called Nofal', who suggested publishing an Arabic-language newspaper for the Chechens to convince them of the advantages of Russian rule. The viceroy assumed that only hostile people such as mullahs and *qadis*, i. e., Islamic judges, would be able to read it. He also assumed that Muslims, who were convinced, would always remain hostile to Russian rule, regardless of what they read.⁶⁸

The second purpose that Uslar indicates is the establishment of a profound loyalty towards Russian rule and culture. So he explicitly claims that we offer "not Christian schools instead of Muslim, but Russian instead of Arab, Russian language instead of the Arabic language."⁶⁹ This explains why he refuses to adopt the Georgian letters for his alphabets and opts instead for Cyrillic letters. He himself admits that the Georgian alphabet would be more appropriate for the Caucasian sounds.⁷⁰ So he based the alphabets on Cyrillic but added some Georgian characters for sounds when he could not find a Cyrillic analog. As a result he claims that Chechens who learned to read Chechen using his alphabet managed fairly comfortably to read Russian texts as well.⁷¹

The last reason that Uslar gave in favor of a people having their own alphabet was the need for ethnic self-confidence. Only with their own written language, according to Uslar, could the character of a people be understood.⁷² He also recognized the desire of a conquered people to retain their individuality and therefore a desire to have their own expressive language. This was accompanied by the desire to develop as a civilized people, according to Uslar.⁷³ This last point obviously has to be seen in the general line to strengthen national feelings and movements as a countermeasure against Muslim authorities.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Uslar refrains from spreading Christianity and states directly: "Proselytism is not our business."⁷⁵ This seems to be in contrast to the intentions of Bartholomäi, who

⁶⁸ Cf. N.I. Silaev, "Izbrannye Dokumenty Kavkazskogo Komiteta–Politika Rossii na Severnom Kavkaze v 1860–70-e Gody" [Selected documents of the Caucasus Committee. The politics of Russia in the Northern Caucasus in the 1860s to 1870s], *Sbornik Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva* [Omnibus of the Russian Historical Society] (Moscow: Russkaia Panorama, 2000): 209–211.

⁶⁹ Uslar (1870), 16.

⁷⁰ Uslar (1888), 12–13.

⁷¹ Uslar (1888), 8.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 6–7.

⁷³ Uslar (1870), 1–2.

⁷⁴ Brower (1997), 123.

⁷⁵ Uslar (1870), 16.

cooperated in his Chechen alphabet and dictionary closely with the Society for the Restoration of Christianity in the Caucasus. With the help of this society, he published his Chechen primer in 1866, four years after Ushtar had finished his work and long before Ushtar's own work was published. But he obviously drew extensively from Ushtar's work, and Ushtar frequently indicated his dismay with Bartholomäi's intentions.⁷⁶ This dismay might have been related to the fact that Ushtar even relied on some Islamic leaders in his work. So Kedi Dosov and Mullah Iangulbai Khasanov assisted him in his compilation of the Chechen dictionary and alphabet. At least the latter belonged to the Muslim clergy. With their help the alphabet and dictionary were compiled in 1862, and Ushtar tested the use of his work in a school, which he established, with the help of his two assistants, to prove his ideas. This school lasted three weeks and was attended by twenty-five pupils who came from the Arabic schools in the mosques and were hand-selected by the two Chechen assistants of Ushtar. As a precondition they had to be unable to read Russian, so that the letters were entirely new to them. All of them managed to learn the new Chechen alphabet within these three weeks, to the great relief of Ushtar, who saw his approach vindicated.⁷⁷ Despite these great efforts and the initial success, all of Ushtar's attempts were fruitless. No schools were actually established, and the first Chechen literature to be published at the end of the nineteenth century was in Arabic characters.⁷⁸ This was most likely due to a policy change as the result of the viceroy Prince Aleksandr Ivanovich Bariatsinskii (1815–1879) stepping down. He was succeeded by Grand Prince Mikhail Nikolaevich, who was much less sensitive toward the local conditions of the recently subdued peoples.⁷⁹

Grand Prince Mikhail Nikolaevich immediately became very distrustful of the Qadiriyya⁸⁰ movement, a Sufi order that spread in Chechnya and Ingushetia after the Caucasian War. The head of the Chechen Qadiriyya,

⁷⁶ Ushtar (1888), 19.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁸ A.A. Isaev, "Die 'Islamische Druckerei' von Muhammad-Mirza Mavraev" [The Islamic imprint of Muhammad-Mirza Mavraev], in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries*, vol. 1, eds. M. Kemper, A. v. Kügelgen, and D. Yermakov (Berlin: Schwarz, 1996), 342–346.

⁷⁹ M. Gammer, "The Qadiriyya in the Northern Caucasus," *Journal of the History of Sufism* no. 1 (2000): 279.

⁸⁰ The Qadiriyya order is one of the most popular Sufi orders. It is less strictly organized than the Naqshbandiyya and practices a specifically loud prayer (*dhikr*) in their mystic rituals. Because of their prayers the Russian authorities called the order "Zikrists."

Kunta Hajji (1830?–1867?), actually preached peace and submission to Russian rule. Nevertheless, Russian distrust led to his arrest when, in the Zakatal District in the South Caucasus, a conflict with an unrelated Islamic movement broke out. In time this resulted in Chechen protests, which peaked in the “Shali affair” in 1864, when Chechens peacefully protested the arrest of Kunta Hajji and were attacked by the Russian army. Their virtually unarmed resistance was interpreted as fanaticism by the Russian military command. The military command suggested in reports, that the Chechen fanaticism made the Chechens believe that could rely solely on daggers in the resistance to the Russian army, although they were actually desperate and had no choice.⁸¹ The great distrust towards the Chechens made it impossible even to establish enduring institutions that might have counteracted the Islamic teachings, such as the schools,⁸² which Uslar had envisioned. Brute force prevailed once again. Under the reign of the Grand Prince, ethnographic research could not assist in establishing a Chechen sense of identity and nation but only in fighting the Chechens. So here politics eventually blocked another approach that could have served as a tool for better Russian-Chechen relations. We cannot compare these early attempts to the Ingush situation, since Uslar did not distinguish between Chechens and Ingush; thus the Ingush’s needs were never addressed, and they did not get their own dictionary until the Soviet era. Nevertheless, at the end of the nineteenth century, there were most likely more Ingush educated in Russian schools than Chechens.⁸³ But this was rather influenced by good Ingush-Russian relations and the Ingush proximity to Vladikavkaz and the opportunities for education there than by an educational policy of the Russian Empire, which did not exist.

⁸¹ V.C. Akaev, *Sheikh Kunta–Khadzhdzhi: zhizn’ i Uchenie* [Sheikh Kunta-Hajji. Life and teachings] (Groznyi: Ichkeriia, 1994), 45, 49–75; Ippolitov (1869) 12–14; S. Ėsadze, *Istoricheskaja Zapiska ob Upravlenii Kavkazom* [Historical note on the administration of the Caucasus] (Tiflis: Guttenberg, 1907), 216; Mikhail Nikolaevich to D.A. Miliutin, No. 9. 1864, RGVIA, f. 38, op. 7, d. 429, ll. 53–61; Report, February 9, 1864, RGVIA, f. 14719, op. 3, d. 756.

⁸² Mal’sagova (1968), 7–9; A.I. Khasbulatov, *Razvitie Promyshlennosti i Formirovanie Rabocheho Klassa v Checheno–Ingushetii (Konec XIX–Nach. XX v.)* [The development of the industry and the shaping of the working class in Checheno-Ingushetia (end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century)] (Moscow: Delo, 1994), 30.

⁸³ Cf. Dettmering (2011), 326–327.

'*Adat* as a Remedy against *Shari'a*

Measured by the quantity of collected material, legal issues drew more interest than any other topic of the ethnographers. This was particularly true in the first half of the nineteenth century. And the reason was the battle against Islamic values and the influence of *qadis* on the mountaineers' societies. While this battle had ramifications throughout the North Caucasus and even beyond, in Chechnya it was seen as particularly important, because following Gldenstdt's observation that the Vainakhs were former Christians, the idea had circulated that the Chechens were not real Muslims.⁸⁴ Nevertheless in the legal practice this idea became important only after Russia suffered several decisive reversals of fortune in the war against Shamil. For instance, a military expedition was able to defeat the resistance movement of Imam Shamil in Dagestan and Chechnya in 1839. But while the decisive military strike took place in Dagestan, only one year later Shamil, who was one of a few survivors, reappeared in Chechnya and managed to re-establish his power and influence so swiftly that the defeat became nothing more than a footnote in history. And in the South Caucasus the Hahn project, a project named after Paul von Hahn (1793–1862) to directly introduce Russian administration in this region, famously failed.⁸⁵ Now the desire to better understand the ethnicities in the Caucasus became overwhelming, and ethnographers were required to

⁸⁴ Anna Zel'kina, "Islam v Cecne do rossiiskogo zavoevaniia" [Islam in Chechnya until the Russian conquest], in *Chechnia i Rossiia: obshchestva i gosudarstva* [Chechnya and Russia. Societies and states], ed. D.E. Furman (Moscow: Polinform-Talburi, 1999); Reineggs (1796); F.A. Bieberstein, *General Historical and Topographical Description of Mount Caucasus with a Catalogue of Plants Indigenous to the Country: Two Volumes Translated From the Works of Dr. Reineggs and Marshal Bieberstein* (London: Taylor, 1807), 43; F.I. Leontovich, *Adaty kavkazskikh gortsev, Materialy po obychnomu pravu Severnogo i Vostochnogo Kavkaza* [Materials for the customary law of the Northern and Eastern Caucasus], vol. 2 (Odessa: P.A. Zelenyi, 1883), 88–91; C.P. Sidorko, "Anna Zelkina: Quest for God and Freedom, The Sufi Response to the Russian Advances in the North Caucasus (Chechnya and Daghestan)" (review), *Jahrbcher fr Geschichte Osteuropas* [Annals of the history of Eastern Europe] 49, no. 4 (2001): 618–619; M.M. Blied and V.V. Degoev, *Kavkazskaia voina* [The Caucasian War] (Moscow: Roset, 1994), 220–221.

⁸⁵ A.L.H. Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov: Viceroy to the Tsar* (Montreal: Kingston, 1990), 129–130; sadze (1907), 76; S.G. Agadzhanov and V.V. Trepavlov, eds., *Natsional'nye Okrainy Rossiiskoi Imperii Stanovlenie i Razvitie Sistemy Upravleniia* [The national peripheries of the Russian Empire. Beginnings and development of the administrative systems] (Moscow: Slavianskii dialog, 1997), 300; Leontovich (1883), vol. 2, 36.

research these peoples. Among the first were the professor of Kazan University Aleksandr Kasimovich Kazembek (1802–1870); the Russian civil servant Nikolai Egorovich Tornau (1812–1882), who administered Azerbaijan; and the Orientalist Nikolai Vladimirovich Khanykov (1822–1878). They were the first to recommend local law, *'adat*, as a remedy against Islamic law, *shari'a*. Thus they hoped to limit the influence of the Muslim spiritual leaders and *qadis* and hoped to weaken Shamil's resistance movement.⁸⁶ Encouraged by these recommendations, Evgenii Aleksandrovich Golovin (1782–1858/1837–1842), the commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, established the mountaineers' administration in Tiflis.⁸⁷

The mountaineers' administration immediately started to collect information on the customary law of the North Caucasian mountaineers. The mountaineers' administration asked the local commanders along the Caucasus line for help. So General Robert Karlovich Freytag (1802–1851), the commander of the left flank of the Caucasus line, gathered information on the Chechens and Kumyk, while General Petr Petrovich Nesterov (1802–1854), who commanded the Vladikavkaz Military District, did the same with the Ingush and Ossetians.⁸⁸ The two researchers, who Freytag advised to collect evidence, tried to give a very complete picture for both the Kumyks and the Chechens separately. Thereby they shared the notion that *shari'a* was not popular among the Chechens.⁸⁹ Nesterov limited his report to simple answers to the questions introduced by the mountaineers' administration. He did not distinguish between Ingush and Ossetians, despite the fact that the two peoples' traditions differed considerably. Lieutenant Colonel Bibikov wanted to use the collected material to compose a codex for customary law.⁹⁰ Later, particularly after the Caucasian War, additional collections of customary law were assembled. We do not know to what extent the collections were used in practical decisions during the Caucasian War. After the Chechen administration was set up in 1852, a court, the Makhkama Chachani, was introduced in Chechnya for the first time. At first it was declared a *shari'a* court, but later it changed to an *'adat* court.⁹¹ We can assume, both from the judges represented and from the general experi-

⁸⁶ Bobrovnikov (2002), 148.

⁸⁷ Anonymous, RGVIA, f. 38, op. 7, d. 68, ll. 1–6; Anonymous 1842, RGVIA, f. 38, op. 7, d. 68.

⁸⁸ Leontovich (1883), 84–85, 113.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 88–91; Sidorko (2001), 618–619; Bliev and Degoev (1994), 220–221.

⁹⁰ Leontovich (1883), 52; Agadzhanov, S.G. and Trepavlov (1997), 300–301.

⁹¹ Cf. Dettmering (2011), 262–264, 288–289.

ence with these courts,⁹² that the court used both *shari'a* and *'adat* all the time. But most likely *shari'a* was treated more favorably before the defeat of Shamil to reassure allies of Shamil that they would not have to give up Islam. After the defeat the role of *'adat* as a remedy against *shari'a* was stressed. Thereby attempts were made to manipulate *'adat* to outlaw unacceptable traditions like the blood feud. And because the law was fixed in writing, it was taken out of the context of the local communities and their guarantees; as Michael Kemper put it, community law was transformed into customary law. Eventually this caused the population to obey the law less, although the courts were actively used and many disputes were reported.

The fate of the Ingush concerning this issue did not differ significantly from the Chechen case. The most important point might be that a court with the Ingush was later established. But with the general installation of Russian-controlled courts in the North Caucasus, the Ingush received their courts. Whether there were differences in the jurisdiction of the Ingush and Chechen courts and whether the general ethnographic collections or local decisions by the actual *shari'a* and *'adat* judges were more important is still open to further inquiry.

The Merger of Chechens and Ingush into One Ethnic Entity

In the 1870s, more than ten years after the last Ingush adopted Islam in 1862, ethnological ideas about the Ingush changed profoundly. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Uslar and his mentor Bergé—unlike all other researchers—refused to distinguish between Chechens and Ingush⁹³ and even refused to use the very common name “Ingush.” The reason for this remains unclear. It might have been a result of linguistic studies, which led to the idea that there are many dialects but no different languages. This fact might be owed to the desire to educate more people with one alphabet and dictionary. However, until the 1870s other researchers did not follow this approach, and the political wisdom of

⁹² Cf. Ivanenkov (1910), p. 43–44; I.L. Babich, *Pravo i Zhizn' na Severnom Kavkaze* [Law and life in the Northern Caucasus] (Moscow: no publisher given, 2000); Irina L. Babich, ed. *Pravovoj status islama na Severnom Kavkaze* [The legal status of Islam in the Northern Caucasus] (Moscow: Izdat. Rossijskogo Univ. Družby Narodov, 2004).

⁹³ Uslar (1888), 2; A.P. Berzhe, *Chechnia i chechentsy* [Chechnya and the Chechens] (Groznyi: Kniga, 1991), passim.

separating the unproblematic Ingush from the Chechens might have had a stronger impact on the ethnographers of that time.⁹⁴ But in the 1870s the Ingush were sometimes considered even worse than the Chechens; at least they had lost their special status. The Chechen author Umalat Laudaev was the first to call the Ingush “the wildest.”⁹⁵ Other authors followed suit and called the Ingush deceitful and explained their loyalty towards Russia as due to weakness rather than real conviction.⁹⁶ Even their hospitality was considered false.⁹⁷ This development might have been spurred by the evolution of the Qadiriyya, the Sufi order, which came with Kunta Hajji to the North Caucasus in Ingushetia. So the Batal-Hajji Wird⁹⁸—who were organized into a paramilitary structure and who wore daggers, giving them a fierce appearance—had a great impact here. They were particularly distrusted,⁹⁹ although Batal-Hajji himself was apolitical and tried to maintain good relations with the military.¹⁰⁰ He actually fought Ingush paganism, which was still alive in the local traditions.¹⁰¹ Interestingly, this view did not yet have an impact on the military and administration and the policy towards the Ingush. While the ethnographers sowed distrust to-

⁹⁴ Cf. G.K. Martirosian, “Nagornaja Ingushia” [Mountain Ingushia], in *Ingushi. Sbornik statei i ocherkov po istorii i kul'ture ingushskogo naroda* [The Ingush. Collection and sketches on the history and culture of the Ingush people], ed. A.Kh. Tankiev (Saratov: Detskaia Kniga, 1996), 351; “O Polozhenii na Kavkaze” [On the situation in the Caucasus] Report, September 13, 1864, f. 38, op. 7, d. 470, ll 1–14.

⁹⁵ Cf. Laudaev (1872), 8.

⁹⁶ Cf. Grabovskii (1876), 12.

⁹⁷ Ibid.; Baddeley (1940), vol. 1, 14.

⁹⁸ *Wirds* (an Arabic term) are Sufi prayers beyond the obligatory Muslim prayers. They are defined by a Sufi sheikh, and the name is used for (sub-)divisions of Sufi orders. In this latter sense the name is used in Chechnya too as subdivisions of the Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya orders. The Qadiriyya *wirds* appeared after the deportation of Kunta Hajji and were usually named after his most important disciples, who continued his preachings. The most important was the Kunta-Hajji Wird. The other *wirds* were named after their leaders. Two other *wirds* were the Batal-Hajji Wird and the Bamat-Girei-Hajji Wird. The former was only located in Ingushetia and had particularly strict rules, which that separated them from the society, including endogamy. The latter had its center in the mountainous Chechnya and was closely related to the Mitaev family.

⁹⁹ J. Meskhidze, “Shaykh Batal Hajji from Surkhokhi: Towards the History of Islam in Ingushetia,” *Central Asian Survey* no. 1/2 (2006): 183.

¹⁰⁰ Akaev (1994), 92–94; A. Bennigsen, “The Qādirīyah (Kunta Hājī) Tarīqa in North-East Caucasus: 1850–1987,” *Islamic Culture: An English Quarterly* no. 2/3 (1988): 67–68; A. Bennigsen (1988); S.E. Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (London: Hurst and Co., 1985), 9–10.

¹⁰¹ Baddeley (1940), vol. 1, 219.

wards the Ingush based on their Islamicization, the Russians remained on good terms with the Ingush politically.

But the ethnographers soon went one step further. While their predecessors declared the Ingush people to be separate from the Chechens, in the late 1870s they reversed this statement and declared the Ingush to be part of the Chechen people. For example, P. Golovinskii considered the Ġalgaj (he does not use the name Ingush, but the Ġalgaj are part of the Ingush, and the name “Ġalgaj” is the Ingush name for Ingush) one of three groups of the mountain Chechens. The others were the Chechens proper and the Ākqi.¹⁰² The French ethnographer and anthropologist Ernest Chantré (1843–1924), who visited the Caucasus at that time, considered the Chechens an ethnic group that comprised the Great Kists, the Little Kists, the Ingush, the Ġalgaj, the Karabulaks, and the Itchkerians.¹⁰³ Almost all others followed suit.¹⁰⁴ Only the ethnographer Nikolai Nikolaevich Kharuzin (1865–1900) defended the idea that the Chechens and Ingush were two separate peoples.¹⁰⁵ So the ethnographers virtually erased one ethnic group from the literature on the Caucasus because of its close proximity to the Chechens and its adoption of Islam.

Soon after this change a new uprising broke out in Chechnya, which ethnographers’ saw as Sufi-led. In 1877 the Russo-Turkish War began, and those who hoped to get rid of Russian domination rose up against Russia, hoping for Ottoman help. This uprising was centered in eastern Chechnya and affected most Chechens. But the Ingush, although Islamized and with a strong Sufi movement, remained calm once again. However, the Russian administration’s relationship with the Ingush leaders now broke down. The politics followed the path the ethnographers had shown. Russian authorities no longer distinguished between the Ingush and the Chechens, and they put the Ingush under stricter rule than ever before. From 1888 until the 1905 revolution, the Ingush even came under

¹⁰² Golovinskii (1878), 241–242.

¹⁰³ E. Chantré, *Recherches Anthropologiques Dans le Caucase* [Anthropological research in the Caucasus] (Paris: Ch. Reinwald, Henri Georg, 1887), vol. 4, 187.

¹⁰⁴ L.P. Zagurskii, *Zametka ob Issledovanii Kavkazskikh Iazykov* [Notes on the exploration of the Caucasian languages] (Moscow: Sinodal’naja tipografiia, 1880), 9–10; Vertepov (1892), vol. 2, 71–75; Ch. Ė. Akhriev, “Ingushskie Prazdniki” [Ingush holidays], *SSKG* no. 5 (1871): 1; Akhriev (1875), 1; Baddeley (1940), vol. 1, 249–250; Dalgat (1893), 42.

¹⁰⁵ N.N. Kharuzin, “Zametki o Juridicheskom Byte Chechentsev i Ingusheji” [Notes on the legal life of the Chechen and the Ingush], *Sbornik Materialov po Ėtnografii* [Volume of materials on ethnography] 3 (Moscow: Tipografiia E. G. Potapova, 1888): 115–116.

the direct rule of a Cossack administration, in a region where the relations between the autochthones and the Cossacks were fairly tense and dominated by direct competition for arable land. The Batal-Hajji Wird in particular became a target of political prosecution.¹⁰⁶ When an infamous robber called Zelim Khan was arrested and executed in 1911, his ties to the Bamat-Hajji Wird¹⁰⁷ in Chechnya led to Russian accusations that the Batal-Hajji Wird was involved, too. Batal-Hajji (?–1914) was arrested and deported in the same year and his *wird* was prosecuted.¹⁰⁸ Thus the administration followed the ethnographers' decision to "unite" Chechens and Ingush into one people, and this led to more hardship for the Ingush, as they now received the same treatment as the Chechens. This ethnographic and political "unification" of the two ethnic groups did not change the reality. Obviously the quite different history of the nineteenth century had formed different peoples. Although national consciousness can only be observed in the twentieth century among Chechens and Ingush, the fault lines established at the beginning of the nineteenth century between Chechens and Ingush were in effect when the national sentiments appeared.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

The comparison of ethnographers' impacts on the fate of the Chechens and the Ingush shows the close link between army needs and ethnographic results. Not only did the Chechens, as the more problematic people in the eyes of the Russian administration, get much more attention from ethnographers, but the ethnographers had a bigger impact on the decisions made by the Russian administration. Surprisingly, ethnography's benign neglect

¹⁰⁶ N.D. Kodzoev, *Istoriia Ingushskogo Naroda* [History of the Ingush people] www.ingushetiya.ru/history/book/ [November 10, 2003]; S.G. Agadzhanov and V.V. Trepavlov (1997), 308–310; preface (without author or pagination), in *Zakonodatel'nye Akty, Kasaiushchiesia Severnogo Kavkaza i v chastnosti Terskoi Oblasti. Sbornik Ukazov Pravitel'stviushchego Senata, Polozhenii Komiteta Ministrov, Pravitel'stvennykh Rasporiazhenii, Raz'iasnenii Gosudarstvennogo Soveta i Pravitel'stviushchego* [Legal acts concerning the Northern Caucasus and especially the Terek oblast. Volume of the legal acts of the Governing Senate, rulings of the Committee of Ministers, the State Council and the Government], ed. A.A. Kanukov (Vladikavkaz: Tipolitografiia A.G. Gabisova, 1914); Martirosian (1996), 290.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. note 98.

¹⁰⁸ Akaev (1994), 94–97; Meskhidze (2006), 184; Bennigsen (1988); Wimbush (1985), 24.

¹⁰⁹ Dettmering (2009), 594–595.

of the Ingush until the late nineteenth century, when they too were scrutinized in a huge new wave of ethnography of folklore and other quotidian things, might actually have helped Ingush-Russian relations. While in most fields we either lack data or cannot see a difference in the treatment of Chechens and Ingush based on ethnographic research, this difference becomes clear in the research on social structures and raids. The raids are not intensely researched but rather assessed by their quality. And because of the non-Muslim background of the Ingush in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Ingush raids were considered less dangerous and thus raised fewer concerns. There are no reports on major retaliations that could have worsened Russian-Ingush relations. Although the social structures, according to the research of that time, were similar or identical, because of the conflict with the Chechens, only the Chechen structures were subjected to attempts at co-optation and manipulation. But overly superficial knowledge of these structures, combined with class-conscious and role-conscious thinking, led to both an exaggeration of the possibilities for operating with these structures and a limitation to the manipulation of these structures instead of the creation of something new. Thus ethnography impeded rather than enhanced policies towards the Vainakh people.

National Inventions: The Imperial Emancipation of the Karaites from Jewishness

Mikhail Kizilov

The Crimea and its Ethnic History: An Introduction

Situated at the junction of the trade routes leading from Italy and Byzantium (and later the Ottoman Empire) to Poland, Russia, and the countries of the East, the Crimea had always been an attractive place for carrying out international trade. After the Ottoman conquest of 1475, the peninsula was divided into two parts: Ottoman and Tatar. Those regions, ports, and towns that were most useful from a mercantile and administrative perspective came under Ottoman jurisdiction, while the rest of the Crimea, together with the southern part of contemporary Ukraine and the North Caucasus, was ruled by the Crimean khan. Caffa, which contemporary sources often called “Küçük İstanbul” (“Small İstanbul” in Turkish),¹ the largest Crimean maritime town in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, became the center of Caffa *eyalet* (Ottoman province) after 1475.

After the peace treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, the Crimean Khanate received full independence for the first time in its history. The country was able to enjoy independence for only a few years, until 1783, the time of the final Russian annexation. During these few years of independence, the Khanate was constantly disturbed by revolts of the *bey* clans, the rivalry of a few members of the Giray dynasty, general turmoil, and emigration of the local population. One of the ruling khans, Şahin Giray (he was a favorite of Russian empress Catherine II and ruled with interruptions from 1777–1783), attempted to undertake a few radical administrative

¹ Also known as Kaffa/Capha; Turk. *Keefe*; Russ. *Theodosiia*. I am using a slightly simplified system of transliteration of Turkic and Arabic names and terms.

reforms, which would allow him to become a real ruler of the Crimean land. However, his policy met with strong opposition from the local aristocracy, Nogay Tatars, and other members of the Giray dynasty.² The final blow to the existence of the Crimean Khanate came in April 1783, when it was annexed by Russia.³

For the Russian Empire the last quarter of the eighteenth century was the era of the acquisition of large territories, not only in the west of the country, but also in the south. In 1777, a few years before the final annexation of the Crimea by Russia, the Russian government decided to resettle the local Christian population into the Sea of Azov area. Combined with the hasty emigration of the local Muslims (the Turks and the Tatars) to the Ottoman Empire, this resettlement left the Crimea largely depopulated. As a consequence, after 1783 the Russian government encouraged the mass emigration of its citizens to the Crimea. Soon the population void was filled by Russian, Ukrainian, German, Swiss, Ashkenazi Jewish,⁴ Mennonite, Bulgarian, Polish, and other colonists.

The territory of the former Crimean khanate was first reorganized as the Tavrisheskaia *oblast* (i.e., the Taurida⁵ region; 1784) and divided into seven *uezds*.⁶ At the time of Tsar Paul (Pavel I) the Crimea was included in the Novorossiiskaia *guberniia*,⁷ while in 1802, at the time of Alexander I, it was reorganized again as the Tavrisheskaia *guberniia*. The period after 1783 and approximately until the Crimean War (1853–1856) might be called a period of transition, whose specific feature was re-adjustment of

² See more in F.F. Lashkov, *Shagin-Girey, poslednii krymskii khan* [Shahin-Girey, the last khan of the Crimea] (Simferopol': Oblpoligrafizdat, 1991).

³ On the years of the independence of the Crimean Khanate and final Russian annexation of the Crimea, see Alan Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea 1772–1783* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970).

⁴ The Crimea was included in the Pale of Settlement. As a consequence, Jews were allowed to settle in the Crimea (apart from the port of Sevastopol).

⁵ *Taurida* / *Taurica* (in Russian *Tavrida* / *Tavrika*) is an ancient Greek term to designate the Crimea; it has also been often used by medieval geographers. *Qırım* / *Krym* / *Crimea* is a medieval Turkic term. At the end of the eighteenth century, in the framework of the process of the return of Greek toponymy to the Crimea, Russian officials often named the Crimea "Tavrida." Later, both terms, "Krym" and "Tavrida," were used interchangeably.

⁶ *Krym: proshloe i nastoiashchee* [The Crimea. Past and present], eds. S.G. Agadzhanov and A.N. Sakharov (Moscow: Mysl', 1988), 34.

⁷ Paul I, who hated his mother Catherine II, tried to liquidate all the empress's reforms and returned the old Tatar names to the Crimean towns instead of the new, Greek ones. However, his rule did not last long, and his successor, Alexander I, continued Catherine's policy in the Crimea.

the former Ottoman and Tatar towns to the standards of European settlements and, ultimately, their conversion to regular provincial Russian towns (the process in which Russian administration succeeded, perhaps, only after the end of the Crimean War).

All ethnic groups who inhabited the Crimea may be divided into two main categories: those who lived there before 1783 (Greeks, Turkic-speaking Krymchaki and Karaite Jews, Armenians, Italians, Tatars, Turks, Gypsies) and those who arrived there after the Russian annexation (Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Bulgarians, Estonians, and Ashkenazi Jews).⁸ Those ethnic groups who had lived under Muslim rule (1475–1783) were culturally (and partly ethnically) Turkicized, while those who settled in the Crimea after 1783 were Russified.

The following stages can be distinguished in the development of Crimean studies in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union:

- The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the information is collected largely by state officials and traveling scientists of non-Russian origin;
- 1810s–1850s: beginning of the study of the Crimea by ethnographers and historians, establishment of museums;
- 1850s: explosion of interest in the Crimea in Russia and in Europe, stimulated by the Crimean War;
- Second half of the nineteenth century to 1917: professional study of the Crimea, establishment of *Tavricheskaia uchenaia arkhivnaia komissiia*;
- 1917–1930s: study of the Crimea by Soviet scholars; establishment of the Taurida University and of *Krymskii otdel okhrany pamiatnikov iskusstva, stariny, prirody i narodnogo byta*; this period ends up with the Stalinist purges of “bourgeois nationalists” in science;
- 1930s–1980s: period of stagnation; study of the ethnic history of the Crimea unwelcome as a consequence of the deportation of ethnic minorities in 1944;
- End of the 1980s to today: renaissance of Crimean studies and emergence of amateur pseudo-scholarly post-Soviet scholarship, coinciding with the return of the deported

⁸ Claims of today’s Tatar ideological leaders to be the only “aboriginal and autochthonous” population of the Crimea are absolutely ahistorical. The Greeks, Jews, Alans, and Armenians lived in the Crimea much earlier than the Tatars – and yet they do not produce any political claims about the necessity of transforming the Crimea into a Greek or Armenian autonomous republic. For more information about the problem of “pseudo-autochthonism” in the Crimea, see Mikhail Kizilov, “‘Autochthonous’ Population, Ethnic Conflicts and Abuse of the Middle Ages in Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea,” in *Gebrauch und Missbrauch des Mittelalters, 19.–21. Jahrhundert / Uses and Abuses of the Middle Ages: 19th–21st Century / Usages et Mésusages du Moyen Age du XIXe au XXIe siècle* (=Mittelalter Studien 17), eds. János M. Bak, Jörg Jarnut, Pierre Monnet, and Bernd Schneidmüller (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2009), 297–311.

Tatars, escalation of ethnic tensions in the Crimea, and establishment of the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea.⁹

Studying the history and ethnography of most of the Crimean peoples in imperial times was normally a purely academic matter. There was no ideological background behind, say, the study of the ethnography and folklore of the Crimean Greeks and Tatars, or behind the archaeological excavations of the Scythian barrows in Kerch.¹⁰ There was perhaps only

⁹ A complete list of all Crimea-related historiographic publications would be too long to be reproduced here. For more detailed bibliography, see A.I. Markevich, *Taurica. Opyt ukazatel'ia sochinenii, kasaiushchikhsia Kryma i Tavricheskoi gubernii voobshche* [Taurica. An attempt at a reference book of publications related to the Crimea and Taurida guberniia in general] (Simferopol': Tavricheskaia gubernskaia tipografiia, 1894); Andrei Mal'gin, *Russkaia Riviera. Kurorty, turizm i otdykh v Krymu v epokhu Imperii* [Russian Riviera. Resorts, tourism, and rest in the Crimea in the imperial era] (Simferopol: Sonat, 2004); Mikhail Kizilov, *Karaites Through the Travelers' Eyes: Ethnic History, Traditional Culture and Everyday Life of the Crimean Karaites according to the Descriptions of the Travelers* (New York: al-Qirqisani, 2003); R.P. Popov, *Mir uchenykh v Krymu: istoricheskii ocherk* [The world of the scholars in the Crimea. Historical outline] (Simferopol': no publisher given, 2007); S.B. Filimonov, *Khraniteli istoricheskoi pamiati Kryma. O nasledii Tavricheskoi uchenoi arhivnoi komissii i Tavricheskogo obshestva istorii, arheologii i etnografii (1887–1931)* [The keepers of the historical memory of the Crimea. On the legacy of the Taurida academic archival committee and the Taurida Society for History, Archaeology, and Ethnography (1887–1931)], 2nd ed. (Simferopol': Izdatel'skii Dom "ChernomorPRESS," 2004).

¹⁰ For obvious reasons the situation changed considerably during Soviet times, especially after the end of World War II. In May 1944 many Crimean ethnic minorities, who were found guilty of active collaboration with the Nazis, were deported from the Crimea. Among them were not only Crimean Tatars but also the Crimean Greeks, Germans, Georgians, Armenians, and Bulgarians. As a consequence, an unwritten ban appeared on studies of the Crimean ethnic minorities, especially on those focusing on the Crimean Tatars. On 1952 a special session of the Crimean Department of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR issued a decree (*postanovlenie*) that required scholars to "decisively fight against idealization of the Khazars, Pechenegs, Cumans, and Tatars in the history of the Crimea." Especially important was a report by the famous Russian professor B.A. Rybakov, who also suggested that research into Crimean history stop idealizing the role of the Khazars and Crimean Khanate in the history of the Crimea: B.A. Rybakov, *Ob oshibkakh v izuchenii istorii Kryma i o zadachakh dal'neishikh issledovanii* [About the mistakes in the study of the history of the Crimea and about the tasks in further studies] (Simferopol: Krymizdat, 1952), 8, 15–16; M. Braichevs'kyi, "Kryms'ka sesiiia 1952 roku" [Crimean session of 1952], *Ruthenica* 1 (2002): 182. Furthermore, in the years to follow, scholars working on the history of the Crimea developed a new political concept of its history. This new concept emphasized the medieval and early modern Russian presence in the Crimea in order to justify its subsequent annexation by Russia. P.N. Nadinskii, *Ocherki po istorii Kryma* [Essays on the history of the Crimea], pts. 1–4

one case in which the interest of state officials and scholars not only forced an ethnic group to start studying its own history but also completely changed this group's ethnic identity. The vicissitudes of the "national invention" of this ethno-religious group, the Crimean Karaite Jews ("the Karaites" for short), shall be analyzed in the article below. In the course of this "invention," the Karaites, who until the end of the eighteenth century had a complicated Judeo-Karaite identity, managed to almost completely shed their Jewishness. On their way to de-Judaization, they were challenged by external factors such as the oppressive anti-Jewish legislation of the Russian government and state anti-Semitism (or, perhaps more precisely in the Karaite case, anti-Talmudism). On the other hand, the Karaites themselves were eager to get rid of their Jewishness, which they regarded as increasingly burdensome and obsolete. It is highly symptomatic that, while trying to prove to the Russian government that their community was non-Talmudic (and later, non-Jewish), the Karaites used as convenient tools such recently emerged sciences as ethnography, paleography, archaeology, and epigraphy. Though the Karaites' de-Judaization has already been partially analyzed in other studies,¹¹ this is

(Simferopol': Krymizdat, 1951–1967); P.N. Nadinskii, "Russkie na Krymskom poluos-trove" [Russians on the Crimean peninsula], *Sovetskii Krym* 3 (1946); P.N. Nadinskii, *Suvorov v Krymu* [Suvorov in the Crimea] (Moscow, 1950); B. Vol'fson, "Prisoedinenie Kryma k Rossii v 1783 godu" [Annexation of the Crimea to Russia in 1783], *Ist-oricheskii zhurnal* 3 (1941); I. Medvedeva, *Russkaya Tavrida* [Russian Taurida] (Sim-feropol', 1949); E.I. Druzhinina, *Kiuchuk-Kainardzhiiskii mir 1774 goda (ego podgo-tovka i zakliuchenie)* [The Kuchuk-Kaynarca Peace Treaty of 1774, its preparation and signing] (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1955); E.I. Druzhinina, *Severnoe Prichernomor'e v 1775–1800 gg.* [Northern Black Sea region in 1775–1800] (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1959); see the survey of the problem in A.I. Aibabin, A.G. Gertsen, and I.N. Khrapunov, "Osnovnye problemy etnicheskoi istorii Kryma" [The main problems of the ethnic history of the Crimea], *Materialy po arkheologii, istorii i etnografii Tavriki* 3 (1993): 212.

¹¹ E.g., Roman Freund, *Karaites and Dejudaization: A Historical Review of an Endoge-nous and Exogenous Paradigm* (=Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion 30) (Stockholm: Almqvist och Wiksell International, 1991); Mikhail Kizilov, "Between the Jews and the Khazars," *Pinkas* 2 (2008): 34–52; Mikhail Kizilov, "Stanovlenie et-nicheskogo samosoznaniia i istoricheskikh vzgliadov vostochnoevropeskikh karaimov v kontekste obshcheevreiskoi istorii kontsa XVIII–nachala XXI veka" [The formation of the ethnic consciousness and historical views of the Eastern European Karaites in the context of general European history from the end of the nineteenth through the begin-ning of the twenty-first century], in *Klal Israel. Evreiskaia identichnost' i natsionalizm v proshlom i nastoiashchem*, eds. M. Chlenov and A. Fedorchuk (Moscow: Memoris, 2007), 329–350; Philip Miller, *Karaite Separatism in Nineteenth-Century Russia:*

the first article to study this problem within the broader context of the knowledge history of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

The Karaites in Eastern Europe and Elsewhere



Fig. 1. The Karaites of Theodosia in 1837 (by Auguste Raffet)

The Karaite Jews are members of an independent religious movement within Judaism that emerged from the eighth to tenth centuries in Babylon and spread to the countries of the Middle East, Byzantium, North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, and Europe. The name itself, which comes from the word *miqra*, the Hebrew term for Scripture, reflects the main characteristic of the Karaite movement, namely, the recognition of the Tanakh (the Old Testament) as the sole and direct source of religious law, with the rejection of the Oral Law (also known as the Talmud, a later Rabbinic commentary and legal code based on the Tanakh). Due to the prominence of the Rabbanites in Jewish life, much Karaite literature was directed specifically against the doctrine of the Rabbanites.¹²

In various eras and geographic regions, the Karaites' ethnic self-perception was strongly influenced not only by the isolation from other representatives of the Jewish diaspora but also by the influence of the Muslim and Christian environment, which they experienced in a much stronger form than the Rabbanite Jews. In case of the Crimean Karaites, the formation of their self-identification was influenced by such factors as the presence of a Turkic- and Russian-speaking population (after 1783). The Polish-Lithuanian Karaites who preserved the Turkic Karaimo-Kipchak language (also known as Karaim), which they had apparently brought from the Golden Horde, experienced the ethno-cultural influence of the adjacent Slavic peoples (the Poles, Russians, and Ruthenians/Ukrainians), as well as that of the Lithuanians and local Ashkenazi Jews. The contacts between the Ashkenazim and the Karaites were particularly strong in the Galician and Volhynian Karaite communities (primarily in Halicz, Kukizów, and Łuck).

The "Karaite question" appeared as a sort of echo of the "Jewish question," which became a topic for serious debate in many European countries (including the Russian Empire) at the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century. The European governments of that period wanted to integrate into Christian society the influential and wealthy Jewish communities, which up to that time had managed to preserve their "alien" and separated status. One of the most important factors

¹² As an introduction into Karaism and the history of the Karaites in various countries of the world, see *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources*, ed. Meira Polliack (Leiden: Brill, 2003). For a complete bibliography of Karaite studies, see *Bibliographia Karaitica: An Annotated Bibliography of Karaites and Karaism*, eds. Walfish Barry with Mikhail Kizilov (Jerusalem and Leiden: Ben Zvi Institute and Brill Publishers, 2010).

that hindered the integration of European Jewry into Christian society, in addition to their “alien” language (Yiddish), distinctive clothing, external appearance, and specific culture, was their adherence to Judaism. Christian thinkers and government authorities of that time considered that religion alien and “corrupt.” They were especially hostile and contemptuous of the Talmud, an important part of the Rabbinic religious creed and tradition.¹³

In this situation the Karaites, who did not recognize the authority of the Talmud and who, starting around the mid-seventeenth century, elicited great interest from Christian Hebraists and missionaries,¹⁴ were perceived by high-ranking state officials as an important example for carrying out anti-Rabbinic propaganda. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of the entire Jewish population of European countries, it was the Karaites whom the Church considered one of the most promising targets for Christianization and anti-Talmudic propaganda. Christian missionaries’ increasing interest in the Karaites in the nineteenth century shows the importance of this propaganda.¹⁵

Starting from the late eighteenth century, practically all Eastern European Karaites became citizens of the Russian Empire. Under the official pretext of their exemplary moral behavior and contribution to the state welfare, the Russian state began granting the Karaites a number of privileges and concessions.¹⁶ The Talmudic Jews, however, became subject to a series of humiliating and burdensome decrees that imposed on them

¹³ John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 53.

¹⁴ Richard Popkin, “The Lost Tribes, the Caraites and the English Millenarians,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 37 (1986): 213–227; Mikhail Kizilov, “Jüdische Protestanten? Die Karäer und christliche Gelehrte im Frühneuzeitlichen Europa,” in *Christen und Juden im Reformationszeitalter*, eds. R. Decot and M. Arnold (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 237–264.

¹⁵ See numerous reports by Christian missionaries: “Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Drs. Paterson and Henderson,” *Jewish Expositor* 6 (1821): 470; “Extract of a Letter from the Same [W. Ferd. Becker],” *Jewish Expositor* 7 (1822): 74; “Interesting Communication of Dr. Pinkerton, Respecting the Jews in Poland,” *Jewish Expositor* 6 (1821): 444–445; Warren P. Green, “The Karaite Community in Interwar Poland,” *Nationalities Papers* 14, no. 1/2 (1986): 102; Wolfgang Häusler, *Das galizische Judentum in der Habsburgermonarchie. Im Lichte der Zeitgenössischen Publizistik und Reiseliteratur von 1772–1848* [The Jewry of Galicia in the Habsburg Empire in the light of contemporary journalism and travelogues 1772–1848] (Munich: Verl. für Geschichte und Politik, 1979), 35, 74.

¹⁶ Miller, *Karaite Separatism*, 33–34.

double taxation, compulsory military service, residence exclusively within the Pale of Settlement, and so on. Events proceeded in the same manner in another large state, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where a small community of Galician Karaites lived. In 1774 Empress Maria Theresa of Austria (1740–1780) granted the Galician Karaites the same rights that she had already given to the Empire's Christian population.¹⁷

When contemplating the reasons why the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century was marked by a new stage in the Karaites' national self-identification, it is worth recalling the fact that, in general, the nineteenth century was the age of forming national ideologies. It was in this period that several of the largest European empires were formed, together with unshakable national theories. It was then that such terms emerged as "nation" and "nationalism." Finally, the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century was the time of the Jewish Emancipation. Some of the general features peculiar to the process of forming national ideologies allow us to illustrate how the Eastern European Karaites formed their national ideology and self-identification. Along with socio-economic and political factors, one of the most important features of the forming of all national ideologies is the "romanticization" of ethnic history, which is first manifested in the appearance of "romantic" mythological concepts, which later usually receive "academic" development and verification. Pseudoscientific, romantic theories and mythological concepts of this type, as a rule, justified a nation's territorial and historical claims, making its history look much more ancient, noble, and autochthonic, strengthening the feeling of a common national identity and promoting the development of patriotic and nationalistic tendencies.¹⁸ On the

¹⁷ Josef Karniel, *Die Toleranzpolitik Kaiser Josephs II* [The politics of tolerance of Emperor Joseph II] (Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1985), 291–293, 443; Natan Schur, *The Karaite Encyclopedia* (Vienna: Peter Lang, 1995), 194–195, 36–37. For more details, see Mikhail Kizilov, *The Karaites of Galicia: An Ethnoreligious Minority Among the Ashkenazim, the Turks, and the Slavs, 1772–1945* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009).

¹⁸ The Karaites were not unique in such "romanticization" of their history: practically every small ethnic community in Europe had similar traditions. See Bernard D. Weinryb, "The Beginnings of East-European Jewry in Legend and Historiography," in *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, eds. Ben-Horin Meir et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 445–502. The Karaite case is unique from another standpoint: the Karaites were perhaps the only Jewish community that cherished these romantic delusions until the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover, they were the only community in the twentieth century that, on the grounds of this naive romanticization, managed to build a scientific theory proving their non-Jewish, Turkic-Mongol-Ugrian-Khazar origin (see below).

other hand, there also existed an opposite mythological tendency. According to this tendency, the necessity to construct a unified and unanimous ideological concept of the past compelled a nation (or ethnic group) not only to “remember” but also to “forget.” Forget, first of all, about some events that would make this ideological concept look awkward—unsuccessful military campaigns, devastating defeats, offenses to national pride, and the like.

The process of the formation of the Karaite national ideology may perhaps be best observed using Toynbee’s “challenge-and-response pattern.”¹⁹ The first challenge to the position of Eastern European Karaites as an ethnic entity was made in 1795 by the edict of Catherine II. This decree gave them the same second-class legal status as the Rabbanites and jeopardized their prosperous and secure economic position in the Crimea and elsewhere in the Russian Empire. Karaite response was swift and efficient. A number of petitions and appeals were sent to various official authorities, and a special delegation to solve this problem was sent to her Imperial Majesty, Catherine II.²⁰ In 1795, as a result of the actions of the leaders of the Karaite community, the Russian government exempted the Karaites from the double taxation that was imposed on all other Jewish subjects of the Empire.

Thus 1795 might be considered the starting point for the awakening of Karaite national feelings that had been dormant in previous centuries. In the 1795 petition that was presented to Platon Zubov, governor general of Ekaterinoslav’ and Taurida *gubernii*as, the Crimean Karaites wrote: “Our ancient Jewish society apparently settled in the Crimea under the name of the Karaites around 450 years ago.”²¹ It is clear from this statement that the Karaites regarded themselves as descendants of the ancient Jews who had migrated to the Crimea, “apparently” (as they themselves wrote) in the mid-fourteenth century. The level of historical knowledge of the Crimean Karaites of the time is clearly demonstrated by an episode related to the visit of French marshal Auguste Frédéric de Marmont to the Eupatoria

¹⁹ As a justification of this sort of methodological approach towards the history of the Karaites, see the book by Zvi Ankori, who analyzed the early stages of Karaite history using Toynbee’s methodology (Zvi Ankori, *Karaites in Byzantium: The Formative Years, 970–1100* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 8–58.

²⁰ For details, see Miller, *Karaite Separatism*, 13–17, 215–219.

²¹ The full text of this petition is published in O.B. Belyi, “Iz istorii karaïmskoi obshchiny Kryma v kontse XVIII–nachale XIX vv.” [From the history of the Karaite community in the Crimea at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century], *Krymskii Muzei* 1 (1994): 31–32. The earliest written evidence concerning the presence of the Karaite community in the Crimea dates back to 1278 (Ankori, *Karaites*, 60, ft. 12).

Karaite community in 1834. To Marmont's amazement and derision, intellectual leaders of the Karaite community were unable to answer relatively simple questions about their people's history and origins. According to Abraham ben Samuel Firkovich, "The marshal smiled and noted, 'It is surprising that you know absolutely nothing about your past. You do not even know what happened merely three hundred years ago.' One can easily imagine how ignorant we looked to this renowned visitor."²²

Another challenge, the 1827 edict on the military conscription of the Jews of the Russian Empire, again jeopardized the Karaites' advantageous economic status. It evoked an even stronger reaction: a new, more representative delegation was sent to Nicholas I. Its aim was to obtain a special legal status that differentiated the Karaites from other Jews in the Empire. Once again, the Karaite leaders' efforts were successful: in 1827 the Karaites were exempted from military service.²³ There were several reasons why the Karaites' petitions and delegations to the tsars in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century succeeded. First, the Russian administration found in the Karaites a convenient tool in the ideological struggle against the Talmudic Jews. After the Karaite petitions were granted, state officials of both the Habsburg monarchy and tsarist Russia, at the end of the eighteenth century, pretending that they distinguished the Karaites from other Jews because of the latter's "exemplary way of life," started using the Karaites as a tool in their anti-Talmudic policy. By overemphasizing the already existing differences between the Karaites and Rabbanite Jews, Russian officials were saying to the Rabbanites: "Forget about the Talmud, and you will be treated by the state as favorably as your non-Talmudic brethren, the Karaites." Second, the Karaites, with their vast financial potential (a few Karaite families from southern Russia controlled as much as 60 percent of the state's tobacco trade), were very important for the state, as wealthy individuals who could contribute to the state in times of need. This is why Russia's state administration treated the relatively small Karaite community (approx. 3,000–4,000 at the end of the eighteenth century) so well.

In 1837, ten years after returning from the successful 1827 trip, Simcha Babovich, a leader of this trip's delegation, lobbied for the creation of the Karaite Spiritual Consistory.²⁴ From that moment on, the authorities

²² Abraham Firkovich, "Avne zikkaron," *Karaimskaia zhizn'* 5/6 (1911): 83.

²³ For more details, see Miller, *Karaite Separatism*, 20–212.

²⁴ Philip E. Miller, "Spiritual and Political Leadership among Nineteenth-Century Crimean Karaites," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 11, B:3 (1993) (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1994), 3.

stopped viewing Karaites as a part of the Jewish religious community. After all, they had their own board of spiritual administration (this recently founded Karaite Spiritual Consistory) and were not included in the Rabbanite Kahal system. The Karaites themselves apparently also stopped regarding themselves as a part of the Jewish nation. One of the most authoritative researchers of this issue, Philip Miller, treated this event as an unprecedented split in Judaism and not only a key moment in the history of Crimean and Russian Jews but also a remarkable event in Jewish history overall.²⁵

An Official Inquiry that Transformed the Karaite Ethnic Identity



Fig. 2. Abraham Firkovich (from the title page of his *Avne Zikkaron* (Wilno, 1872))

²⁵ Miller, *Karaite Separatism*, xv.

Paradoxically enough, it was the 1839 official inquiry of the general-governor of Novorossia, Count Mikhail Vorontsov, that compelled the Karaites to start a serious full-scale reconstruction (or, rather, construction) of a unified conception of their ethnic past. In this inquiry, the leaders of the Karaite community in Eupatoria were asked about the history of the Karaites, the time of their arrival in the Crimea, the specifics of their religion, and other historical details.²⁶ In spite of the scholarly tone of this inquiry, its main implication was clear: the Karaites had to justify their privileged status with serious historical evidence. If not, then this status could be revoked. In response, a historic expedition was organized, headed by the Karaite collector, editor, translator, and poet Abraham Firkovich (1787–1874).²⁷ In 1839 Firkovich, together with a handful of assistants (primarily young Solomon Beim, another important character in nineteenth-century Karaite history), went on his first research trip in the Crimea. Already in this first pioneering trip, with the help of local officials (and sometimes with the help of the police), he managed to acquire an important collection of old Hebrew manuscripts. Some of them were given to him by members of Crimean Karaite communities, and others were purchased. However, he found the bulk of this early Crimean collection in the *geniza*²⁸ of the Rabbanite (Krymchak²⁹) synagogue in

²⁶ The text of the letter of the civil governor of Taurida, M. Muromtsev, to the Karaite *hakham* Simha Babovich was published in Oleg Belyi, “Obzor arhivnykh dokumentov po istorii karaimskoi obschiny Kryma v pervoi polovine XIX veka” [A survey of archival documents on the history of the Karaite community of the Crimea from the first half of the nineteenth century], *Krymskii Muzei* (1995/1996), 114.

²⁷ For more information about Firkovich and his life and activity, see Dan Shapira, *Avraham Firkowicz in Istanbul (1830–1832): Paving the Way for Turkic Nationalism* (Ankara: KaraM, 2003).

²⁸ *Geniza* is a special area (normally, a room or a closet) in a synagogue designated for the storage of worn-out handwritten and printed scrolls, books, codices, and documents.

²⁹ The Krymchaks (literally, “Crimeans”; *Qırımtatarlar* in Turkic; *крымчаки* in Russian; in English also “Krimchaks/Krymčaks”) were the local Tatar-speaking Crimean Jews who had lived in the Crimea from late medieval times. Until the Russian annexation of the Crimea, they called themselves simply *yehudim/yehudiler* (i.e., “Jews”) or *Srel balaları* (“sons of Israel” in Tatar). “Krymchaks” is an exo-ethnonym given to the local Jews by the Russian administration around the mid-nineteenth century in order to differentiate them from the Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazic Jews. For more information, see Anatoliy Khazanov, *The Krymchaks: A Vanishing Group in the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: Marjorie Mayrock Center, 1989); Mikhail Kizilov, *Krymskaia Iudeia: ocherki istorii evreev, khazar, karaimov i krymchakov na territorii Krymskogo poluostrova s drevneishkikh vremen do nashikh dnei* [Crimean Judea: Notes on the history of the Jews, Khazars, Karaites, and Krymchaks in the Crimea since ancient times] (Simferopol: Dolia, 2011).

Karasubazar. Armed with documents from the Crimean government and police, Firkovich simply broke into the *geniza* without permission from the local Krymchak Jews. Thus he managed to acquire the oldest and most precious part of his collection.³⁰ Subsequently, he took a few more trips—to the Caucasus, Lithuania, Austria, Egypt, Eretz Israel, and the Near East—collecting and acquiring ancient manuscripts from local dealers, community elders, and *genizas*. However, none of the manuscripts acquired by Firkovich during his trips provided any historical information about the Karaites and their settlement in Eastern Europe.

Facing the necessity of providing the Russian government with historical facts about the Karaites' past—and having no data at hand—Firkovich simply decided to falsify sources. It is highly symptomatic that Firkovich, who was a kind of Karaite *maskil*, falsified sources by applying three recently emerged European sciences: paleography, epigraphy, and archaeology.³¹ First, Firkovich composed several pseudo-historic colophons, which he added to the text of several genuine medieval Hebrew manuscripts he found during his travels. These colophons informed astonished readers about the settlement of the Karaites in the Crimea already in the sixth century B.C.³² However, even this was not enough for Firkovich. He needed more substantial “evidence” to show to the public. In the same

³⁰ Firkovich himself wrote about it in his *Avne zikkaron* (see below).

³¹ Generally speaking, archaeology and archaeological evidence played an important role in the process of formation of national ideologies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Anthony Smith, one of the most authoritative students of theories of nationalism, labeled nationalism “political archaeology” and demonstrated the importance of archaeological research in the process of the formation of national ideologies. Interestingly, arguments based on epigraphy and archaeology were instrumental in the debate that took place in the Crimea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century between the representatives of the Rabbinic and Karaite communities. This debate concerned whether the Mangup Jewish cemetery had belonged to the Karaites or to the local Turkic-speaking Rabbanites-Krymchaks. For a survey of this issue, see Toviya Levi[-Babovich], *Ocherk vozniknoveniia karaimizma* [Essay on the origin of Karaism] (Sevastopol': Élektropech. D.O. Kharchenko, arendator L. Ia. Melikhan-Sheĭnin, 1913).

³² For more information about these colophons, see Dan Shapira, “Nyneshnee sostoianie riada pripisok k kolofonom na bibleiskikh rukopisiakh iz pervogo sobraniia A.S. Firkovicha” [The present state of some colophons and marginalia in the Bible manuscripts in the first Firkovich collection], in *Materialy Deviatoi Mezhdunarodnoi Konferentsii po Iudaïke*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Sefer, 2004), 102–130. Among these pseudoepigraphic sources, of special importance is what is known as the “Mejelis document.” For the analysis of this document, see Dan Shapira, “Remarks on Avraham Firkowicz and the Hebrew *Mejelis* ‘Document,’” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 59, no. 2 (2006): 131–180.

1839 trip, Firkovich conducted some naive excavations in the territory of several Karaite cemeteries in the Crimea.³³ Unfortunately, they revealed only late medieval tombstone inscriptions—and none of the ancient graves that he longed to find. As a result, he decided to falsify several tombstone inscriptions. The way he did it was quite simple: by adding and changing Hebrew letters on tombstone inscriptions in Chufut-Kale and Mangup Karaite cemeteries, he altered dates on graves and thus managed to make them much older than they really were. The oldest tombstone inscriptions “discovered” by Firkovich belonged to the first millennium A.D. (in fact, however, the earliest genuine tombstone inscriptions from these two cemeteries date back only to the fourteenth century³⁴). Especially important was a medieval “grave” of Isaac Sangari, a legendary Jewish missionary who, according to medieval tradition, converted medieval Turkic nomads-Khazars to Judaism. The discovery of this grave in a Karaite cemetery was so important to him because it would be a decisive proof of Firkovich’s theory that the Khazars had converted to the non-Talmudic, Karaite variety of Judaism.

The authenticity of the “grave” of Isaac Sangari and his wife Sangarit, as “discovered” by Firkovich in the territory of the Karaite cemetery in Chufut-Kale in 1839, was immediately questioned by the Jewish and European press. Most objective scholars, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, suggested that Firkovich had simply falsified the identity of this grave. It was inconceivable that the grave of the legendary Jewish (i.e., Rabbanite) missionary Isaac Sangari, who supposedly lived in the eighth century, would be found amid late-medieval Karaite tombs. Furthermore, anyone knowledgeable in Jewish paleography immediately recognized as counterfeit the grave’s inscription and the way its date was written.³⁵ However,

³³ Many of Firkovich’s contemporaries called him “archaeologist,” e.g., Evgenii Markov, *Ocherki Kryma* [Sketches of the Crimea] (Simferopol’: Tavriia, 1995), 459–461.

³⁴ See the results of most recent epigraphic study of these cemeteries published in *Matse-vot beit ha-almin shel ha-Yehudim ha-Qaraim be-Chufut-Qal’eh, Qrim* [The tombstones of the Cemetery of the Karaite Jews in Çufut-Qal’eh (the Crimea)], ed. Dan D.Y. Shapira (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2008).

³⁵ Contemporary defenders of Firkovich write that the accusation of forgery appeared only after Firkovich’s death in 1874, when Firkovich himself “was not able to defend his discoveries.” This statement is absolutely wrong. The first accusations appeared immediately after the discovery of Isaac Sangari’s “grave” in 1840. See I.S. Reggio, “1. Aufgefundene Spuren zur karäitischen Geschichte. 2. Schreiben von dem Karäiten Salomo Baum aus der Krim an Herrn I. Blumenfeld in Odessa” [Found traces of Karaite history. Two letters from the Karaites from the Crimea to Mr. Blumenfeld, Odessa], *Israelitische Annalen* [Israelite annals] 2 (1840): 197–198; 215–216; J.B. in Lemberg,

for Firkovich, forging one tomb inscription was not enough. He subsequently falsified dates on about 200–300 tombs in Mangup and Chufut-Kale cemeteries, making them much older than they really were.³⁶



Fig. 3. The falsified inscription on the tomb of Isaac Sangari (as reproduced by Daniel Chwolson)

Firkovich needed all these forgeries in order to compose an absolutely new concept of Karaite history. Firkovich's new understanding of Karaite history in the Crimea was fully reflected in his most important book, *Avne Zikkaron* (Hebrew for "memorial stones"), published in Wilno in 1872. From the list of the subscribers to this book, it appears that *Avne Zikkaron* was composed not so much for a Karaite audience as for European Rabbanite and scholarly circles. According to this book the Karaites, the only true Biblical Jews and the descendants of the ancient Judeans, arrived in

"Etwas über Karäer in der Krim" [Something on Karaites at the Crimea], *Literaturblatt des Orients I* [Paper of literature on the East] (Leipzig, 1840): 442–446, 471–472; cf. also a later article by Abraham Harkavy, "Po voprosu o iudeiskikh drevnostiakh, naidennykh Firkovichem v Krymu" [On the Jewish antiquities found by Firkovich in the Crimea], *Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* 192 (1877): 111–113. For a survey of the "Sangari" debate, see Dan Shapira, "Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern, and Avraham Firkowicz: Notes on Two Forged Inscriptions," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 12 (2002–2003): 223–260; Dan Shapira, "Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern i Avraam Firkovich" [Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern, and Avraham Firkowicz: Notes on two forged inscriptions], *Materialy po Arkheologii, Istorii i Etnografii Tavriki* 10 (2003): 535–555. It is also absolutely wrong that it was only the Rabbanite Jewish scholars who accused Firkovich of forging this tombstone inscription. The Russian scholar N. Murzakevich, who personally saw the grave in 1839, also came to the conclusion that Sangari's grave was falsified: N. Murzakevich, as cited in G. Karaulov, "Primechaniia k poezdke vo vnutrennost' Kryma akademika Pallas. Chufut-Kale i evrei-karaimy" [Notes on the trip of academician Pallas inside the Crimea. Chufut-Kale and the Jewish Karaites], *Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei* 13 (1883): 97. A few other non-Jewish scholars came to the same conclusions.

³⁶ Oral communication of Artem Fedorchuk, head of the Chufut-Kale epigraphic expedition; cf. *Matsevoit beit ha-'almin*.

the Crimea as early as the sixth century B.C.—in other words, much earlier than the crucifixion of Jesus and composition of the “vicious” Talmud. Moreover, it was Karaite missionaries who converted the nomadic Khazars to Judaism in the eighth century A.D. Unlike the “newcomers” (Talmudic Jews), the Karaites were always honest and loyal to the governments of the countries where they lived. All this provided grounds for regarding the Karaites as the most ancient part of the Crimean population, loyal to Christianity and faithful to the Russian Empire. As the most important “evidence” for his theory, Firkovich referred to the aforementioned sources that he himself had falsified.³⁷ Needless to say, all the details of this “historical theory” were invented by Firkovich himself. There is no doubt that the Khazars professed Talmudic Judaism and were not converted to Judaism by the Karaites. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the Karaites arrived in the Crimea only in the thirteenth century A.D.—not in the sixth century B.C.³⁸



Fig. 4. The view of Chufut-Kale Karaite cemetery in the 1840s
(from the album of Dubois de Montpereux)

³⁷ Abraham Firkovich, *Avne zikkaron* (Wilno: Finn and Rosenkranz, 1872).

³⁸ For more details about the arrival of the Karaites and their history in the Crimea, see Kizilov, *Karaites through the Travelers' Eyes*; Kizilov, *Krymskaia Iudeia*.

The official government institutions also seemed to be satisfied. No other additional inquiries were sent, and, consequently, in 1863, the Karaites were given the same rights as Russian Orthodox citizens of the Empire.³⁹ Thus it seems evident that these external challenges (and above all, Vorontsov's inquiry of 1839) awakened the national consciousness of the Karaites and stimulated their interest in studying their own history. Undoubtedly, it is in the nineteenth century, during the formation of the ideological and historical basis for constructing their ethnic "uniqueness," that the Karaites started to lose understanding of their belonging to the Jewish nation and religion. In this period the Karaites started to "forget" the centuries-old cultural ties that bound them to their Rabbanite brethren.

In Search of the Heirs of the Khazar Kingdom

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Abraham Firkovich's romantic theory about the Karaites originating from the ancient Judeans was later replaced by an equally romantic "Khazar" theory. This theory soon became the main concept of Eastern European Karaite national identity. Interestingly enough, the theory concerning the Turkic Khazar origins of the Eastern European Karaites was first formulated by the Russian Orientalists V.V. Grigor'ev and V.D. Smirnov. Intrigued by the alleged Khazar-Karaite connections, Grigor'ev and Smirnov came to the conclusion that the Karaites not only converted the Khazars to Judaism but themselves merged with the Khazars ethnically.⁴⁰ In 1896 Grigor'ev and Smirnov's Khazar theory was transformed by the Karaite leader Seraja Szapszał (or Seraya Shapshal, 1873–1961) into a kind of "scientifically" proved theory.⁴¹ His concept concerning the Khazar origin of the Karaites was accepted by the Karaites as official doctrine after 1927, when Seraja Szapszał became the Polish-Lithuanian *hakham* (head of the Karaite community). Szapszał's "Khazar" de-Judaizing efforts gained strength in interwar Poland, peaking during World War II and the Holocaust. The pseudo-

³⁹ See V.D. Smirnov, Foreword to *Sbornik starinnykh gramot i uzakonenii Rossiiskoi imperii kasatel'no prav i sostoiianiia russko-poddannykh karaimov* [Collection of ancient deeds and laws of the Russian Empire concerning the rights and status of the Karaite Russian subjects], ed. Z.A. Firkovich (St. Petersburg: Izd. Z.A. Firkovicha, 1890), xxviii–xxix.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xxviii–xxix.

⁴¹ Seraya Shapshal, *Chufut-Kale i karaimy v Krymu* [Chufut-Kale and the Karaites in the Crimea] (St. Petersburg: Tipo-lit. i fototipiia P.I. Babkina, 1896).



Fig. 5. Karaites in Chufut-Kale in the 1850s (engraving by Carl Huhn; from right to left: Abraham Firkovich, Solomon Beim, Gabriel Firkovich, Malka Firkovich)

historicism and un-scholarly nature of the “Khazar” theory of the Eastern European Karaites’ origins are apparent to any scholar familiar with the history of the Khazars. Not a single written source contains any information on the alleged ethnic contacts between the descendants of the Judaized Khazars and the medieval Karaites.⁴² Later Karaite authors who lived after the disintegration of the Khazar kingdom ca. 965–968 never wrote about the Khazars as the Karaites’ ancestors. Furthermore, these authors referred to the Khazars by the Hebrew term *mamzerim*, meaning

⁴² Ankori, *Karaites*, 64–79.

“bastards” or “strangers” within the Jewish fold. All this testifies to the fact that the historical Karaites never considered themselves the descendants of the Khazars—and that the idea of the Karaites’ alleged Khazar origin first appeared only during Szapszał’s time.⁴³

About the same time not only the Karaites but also the Rabbanite and non-Rabbanite scholars started exploring the possibility of the Khazar origin of European Jewry in general. As early as 1847, the German historian Karl Neumann cautiously suggested that the Jews, who had been so numerous in the Khazar kingdom, later emigrated to Poland and Russia and thus constituted the main part of Eastern European Jewry.⁴⁴ This idea was later developed by the Austrian scholar Hugo von Kutschera. He published a large monograph and suggested that Russo-Polish Jewry descended from the Finnish (sic!) nomadic Khazars.⁴⁵ Especially important are the publications of the anthropologist Konstantin Ikow, who in 1887 wrote about the non-Semitic racial origin of the European Jews in general, and of the Karaites in particular.⁴⁶

⁴³ As an introduction to Khazar history, see Peter Golden, *Khazar Studies: An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*, 2 vols. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980). For the critique of Szapszał’s historical concept, see Tadeusz Kowalski, “Turecka monografia o Karaimach krymskich,” *Myśl Karaimska* 2, no. 1 (1929): 2–8; Dan Shapira, “A Jewish Pan-Turkist: Seraya Szapszał (Şapşaloğlu) and His Work ‘Qırım Qaray Türkleri,’” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58, no. 4 (2005): 349–380; Mikhail Kizilov, “New Materials on the Biography of S.M. Szapszał (1928–1939),” in *Materialy Deviatoi Mezhdunarodnoi Konferentsii po iudaïke* (Moscow, 2002), 255–273; Mikhail Kizilov and Diana Mikhaylova, “The Khazar Kaganate and the Khazars in European Nationalist Ideologies and Scholarship,” *Archivum Eurasii Medii Aevi* 14 (2005): 31–53; Mikhail Kizilov and Diana Mikhaylova, “Khazary i Khazarskii kaganat v evropeiskikh natsionalisticheskikh ideologiiakh i politicheskii orientirovannoi nauchno-issledovatel’skoi literature” [The Khazar Kaganate and the Khazars in European nationalist ideologies and scholarship], *Khazarskii al’makh* 3 (Khar’kov, 2004): 34–62.

⁴⁴ He, however, did not clarify whether by “Khazar Jews” he meant Judaized Turkic Khazars or ethnic Jewish inhabitants of the empire. K.F. Neumann, *Die Völker des Südlichen Russlands in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* [The peoples of Southern Russia in their historical development] (Leipzig, 1847), 125–126.

⁴⁵ Hugo Kutschera, *Die Chasaren* [The Khazars] (Vienna: A. Holzhausen, 1910). Before Kutschera, Ernest Renan formulated similar ideas in his *Le judaïsme comme race et comme religion* (1883).

⁴⁶ K. N. Ikoff, “Neue Beiträge zur Anthropologie der Juden” [New contributions towards an anthropology of the Jews], *Archiv für Anthropologie* [Archive of anthropology] 15 (1887): 369–389; this article was also published in Russian translation in the periodical *Karaimskaia Zhizn* 12 (1912): 36–43.

In the 1920s and 1930s, many Polish Jewish scholars started to study the history of the Khazars in their search for the beginnings of Jewish settlement in Poland. Some of them (such as Gumpłowicz and Schipper) cautiously suggested that the Khazars played an important role in the formation of European Jewry in general (Rabbanite and Karaite alike) and that Khazar converts to Judaism could have constituted a large part of medieval Jewry in Poland and Eastern Europe.⁴⁷ Were Jewish scholars, as well as the Karaite leaders, driven by the wish to prove to the Judeophobic Polish government their non-Semitic racial origins? In our opinion, the answer is no—it seems that for them it was a scholarly matter and not an ideological agenda.

Their reflections on Khazar history, however, aroused the indignation of the Karaite leaders, who did not like the idea of sharing “their” Khazar forefathers with the Rabbanite Jews—for the Karaites this risked being put on an equal footing with the latter.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, when asked by the Nazis in the 1940s, a few Jewish scholars, despite considering the Karaites to be part of Jewish civilization, testified that the Karaites were of non-Jewish, Mongol-Khazar extraction—and thus helped the Karaites to survive the Holocaust.⁴⁹ After the practically complete annihilation of European Jewry in the Holocaust, interest in the Khazar topic started to be developed in the recently founded (1948) state of Israel. Perhaps the best-known publication on the subject is Avraham Poliak’s *Khazaria: The*

⁴⁷ Ignacy Szipper, *Studja nad stosunkami gospodarczymi żydów w Polsce podczas średniowiecza* [Studies on economic relations of the Jews in medieval Poland] (Lwów: Fundusz Konkursowy im. Wawelberga, 1911), 28; *Żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej* [Jews in re-born Poland], eds. A. Hafftki, I. Szipper, and A. Tartakower (Warsaw, 1936), 111–190. See more in Jacob Litman, *The Economic Role of Jews in Medieval Poland: The Contribution of Yitzhak Schipper* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984).

⁴⁸ See Alexander Mardkowicz, “Kari biz, ari alar” [We there, and they also there], *Karaj Awazy* 12 (1938): 2–3 (the title of this article is, undoubtedly, a calque from Russian “Kuda my, tuda oni”); Sz. Firkowicz, “Odczyt uflu hazzana Szymona Firkowicza” (debates with Jewish scholars on the Khazar question), in the manuscript department of the library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Collection 143, call number 490, fols. 12–17.

⁴⁹ See a classical study by an eyewitness of these events: Philip Friedman, “The Karaites under Nazi Rule,” in *On the Track of Tyranny*, ed. M. Beloff (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1960), 97–123. On the Karaites during the Holocaust, see Warren P. Green, “The Nazi Racial Policy toward the Karaites,” *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 8 (1978): 36–44; Emanuela Trevisan Semi, “L’oscillation ethnique: le cas des Caraites pendant la seconde guerre mondiale,” *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions* 206 (1989): 377–398; R.H. Weisberg, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France* (New York: Vidal Sassoon International Center, 1996), 68–75.

History of a Jewish Kingdom in Europe.⁵⁰ In this book Poliak follows the steps of Neumann, Kutschera, and Gumpłowicz and, on the basis of twisted and unconvincing argumentation, argues that all of European Jewry (including the Karaites) is of non-Semitic Khazar origin. Paradoxically enough, Poliak's theory, which had never been too popular in Israel, was frequently used by Muslim leaders, the ideological opponents of the young Israeli state. Some of them, such as Abdul Rahman of India, raised the question of the Khazar roots of European Jewry during debates concerning the partition of Palestine in 1947. To show that modern Jews had no rights to this territory, he stated: "Khazars of Eastern Europe, Turco-Finns by race, were converted to Judaism. Can their descendants possibly claim any rights simply because the ancestors of their co-religionists had once settled in Palestine?"⁵¹

In spite of the rather weak argumentation of its author, Poliak's theory of the Khazar origins of Ashkenazi Jewry remained quite popular. In 1976 a highly interesting book related to the Khazar history, *The Thirteenth Tribe*, was penned in Europe by Arthur Koestler, the author of the famous anti-Stalinist *Darkness at Noon*. This amateur history book, never taken seriously by professional historians (mostly because of its rather unconvincing methodology and argumentation), nevertheless became one of the most popular books on the subject. In the book Koestler, who was not a historian, proposed paradoxically that the term "anti-Semitism" was nonsensical because European Jewry consisted mainly of Judaized Turks-Khazars.⁵² The modern author Kevin Alan Brook similarly suggested that in the late medieval period, the Jews of Khazar origin might have represented about 20 percent of Ashkenazi Jewry and 60 percent of Ukrainian Jews.⁵³ On a related note, linguist Paul Wexler suggested that Ashkenazi Jewry actually represents a mixture of Turko-Khazar and Slavic populations.⁵⁴ Although discussion regarding the level of Judaization of the

⁵⁰ Avraham Poliak, *Khazaria. Toledot mamlakha yehudit be-Eropa* [Khazaria. History of the Jewish kingdom in Europe] (Tel Aviv, 1951). This book was first published in Hebrew in 1943, that is, before the establishment of the state of Israel.

⁵¹ Weinryb, "The Beginnings," 474.

⁵² Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe* (New York: Hutchinson, 1976; see esp. Chapter 8, "Race and Myth," pp. 181–200). Along with the hypotheses of Polish Jewish authors of the 1930s, this book caused an indignant reply from the Karaite audience. See Simon Szyzman, "Le mythe d'un royaume Juif Khazar," *Le Monde* (March 24, 1978).

⁵³ Kevin Alan Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria* (Northvale, NJ, and Jerusalem, 2002), 281.

⁵⁴ Paul Wexler, *The Ashkenazic Jews: A Slavo-Turkic People in Search of a Jewish Identity* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1993). This theory has recently been supported

Khazars continues, there is certainly very little source evidence concerning the “racial” impact of the Khazars on European Jewry.⁵⁵



Fig. 6. Seraja Szapszał as the head of the Karaite community in Poland in 1938
(photo by I. Semashko)

by Shlomo Sand: Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of Jewish People*, trans. Yael Lotan (London and New York: Verso, 2009).

⁵⁵ See more in Mikhaylova Kizilov, “Khazar Kaganate”; Mikhaylova Kizilov, “Khazary i Khazarskii kaganat”; Kizilov, *Karaites of Galicia*; Dan Shapira, “Khazars and Karaites, Again,” *Karadeniz Araştırmaları* 4, no. 13 (2007): 43–64.

Coming back to the Eastern European Karaites, one should mention that the theory about their “Khazar” origin was not the only remaining Karaite theory about their ethnic origin. Soon the Khazar theory was supplemented by the equally pseudo-scholarly “Kypchak” theory. Elements of the “Kypchak” theory of the Karaites’ origin can be found in the publications of the Karaite scholars Ananjasz Zajączkowski and Seraja Szap-szał in the 1930s. Nevertheless, this theory in its final state was formed by the postwar Karaites, such as Simon Szyszman, Mikhail Sarach, and Mikhail Kazas. According to this theory, the Karaites were descendants of the Polovtsy (i.e., Cumans / Kypchaks / Qıpçaqlar), medieval Turkic-speaking nomads. Again, not a single written source mentions the Kypchak origin of the Karaites. As for parallels between the Karaites’ language and the Kypchaks’ language, they can hardly be serious evidence to prove this theory.⁵⁶ Naive “anthropometric” data of 1920s and 1930s anthropological expeditions cannot be a serious proof either. It is enough to compare them with the data of modern anthropological studies to realize that the presence of minor deviations from the “classical” Ashkenazi anthropological type cannot prove that the Karaites originated from Turkic, Mongol, or Finno-Ugrian nomads.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ For example, even though the Armenians of Galicia and Volhynia also spoke a similar Kypchak language, no serious scholar has ever attempted to “make” them into descendants of the Kypchaks. As an exception, see A.N. Garkavets, “V.V. Bartol’d o verois-povedanii u kipchakov X-XII v.v. i problema etnogeneza armyano-greko-kypchakov i karaimov” [V.V. Bartol’d on the religion of the Kipchaks in the tenth to twelfth centuries and the ethnogenesis of the Armeno-Graeco-Kipchaks and the Karaites], in *Bartol’dovskie chteniia 18–20 marta 1974 g.: Izuchenie istorii srednevekovogo Vostoka V. V. Bartol’dom i sovremennoe sostoyanie nauki; tezisy dokladov i soobshenii*, 18–19 (Moscow: Institut Vostokovedeniia AN SSSR, 1974). The Germanic grammar of Yiddish does not make the Ashkenazi Jews descendants of Germanic tribes either. Generally, it is common for minor ethnic groups, including Jewish ones, to borrow the language of neighboring ethnic groups.

⁵⁷ For instance, recent research carried out by the team of Michael Hammer (M.F. Hammer, A.J. Redd, E.T. Wood, M.R. Bonner, H. Jarjanazi, T. Karafet, S. Santachiara-Benerecetti, A. Oppenheim, M.A. Jobling, T. Jenkins, H. Ostrer, and B. Bonn -Tamir) has shown that the Ashkenazi Jews are most closely related to the Greeks and the Turks. This, however, does not make them descendants of those two people: Michael F. Hammer et al., “Jewish and Middle Eastern Non-Jewish Populations Share a Common Pool of Y-Chromosome Biallelic Haplotypes,” in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 97, no. 12 (2000): 6769–6774. For differences in the racial composition of the Jews and the presence of non-Semitic elements, see also a classical work by the forefather of Jewish anthropology, Arthur Rupp (1876–1943): Arthur Rupp, *The Jewish Fate and Future*, trans. E.W. Dickes (West-

Unfortunately, today the romantic “Khazar” and “Kypchak” theories of Szapszał and his followers are considered the main official academic theory of the history of the Karaites in Lithuania. This case shows that, unfortunately, romantic mythologization often takes precedence over scientifically verified academic theories. Here the victory of the Khazar and Kypchak theories can be explained by a few factors. First of all, it was in Lithuania that the Karaites were especially active in promoting their cause before and after World War II. Second, it was Lithuania that housed the largest Karaite communities (those of Wilno/Vilnius and Troki/Trakai) in the interwar Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. And finally, it is in independent Lithuania today that the Karaites have a strong “Khazar-oriented” Karaite political lobby that influences public opinion and academia—and often silences those who think otherwise. In other Eastern European countries that once contained sizable Karaite communities—such as Russia, Ukraine, and Poland—the situation is slightly different. In these three countries one can come across both the scholarly “Jewish” theory of the Karaites’ origin and the pseudo-scholarly “Khazaro-Kypchak” one in roughly equal proportions. The mechanism of de-Judaization of the Karaite community that Szapszał launched is still being developed by his successors. Today many Crimean Karaite authors call themselves “Turk-Karais” and claim among their ancestors not only the Khazars and Kypchak-Polovtsy, but also the Goths, Huns, Sarmato-Alans, Tauro-Scythians, Mongols-Keraites, and various Altai peoples.⁵⁸ Thus, paradoxically enough, the serious study of the Karaite community, which was initiated in 1839 by General-Governor Mikhail Vorontsov, a member of *Odesskoe obshchestvo istorii i drevnostei* (Odessa Society for History and Antiquities), ended up in a complete transformation of the Karaites’ ethno-religious identity—largely as a consequence of the interest of the Russian administration in their history. The Karaite case is a highly interesting and unusual example of the complete change of an ethnic identity within about 150 years. The Karaites, who in the 1790s considered themselves conservative non-Talmudic scripturalist Jews, by the 1940s transformed into an ethnic group with a distinctive Turkic identity and religion

port: Greenwood, 1940), 11–20. For a survey of the discussion concerning the racial composition of the Jews, see “Jewish Genetics: Abstracts and Summaries” (<http://www.khazaria.com/genetics/abstracts-jews.html>).

⁵⁸ Statements of this type may be found in the majority of recent Karaite publications in Russian, such as *Karaimskaia narodnaia entsiklopediia* [Karaite folk encyclopedia], vol. 6, part 1 (Moscow: Tsentr kul’turny i razvitiia karaimov “Karaylar,” 2000), 8–13.

that they defined as the “Karaite faith,” as different from Judaism as it was from Christianity and Islam. The Karaite case seems to be unique. World history knows several other examples of “endogenous de-Judaization,”⁵⁹ that is, conscious loss of Jewish identity: mountain Jews-Tats and Krymchaki Jews also almost completely lost their Jewish identity after World War II.⁶⁰ However, the Karaite case is the only example in which the loss of Jewish identity was so carefully thought out and supported by the wealth of scholarly literature composed by the members of the community.

What can one learn from the Karaite case? First, as mentioned above, the Karaites represent a unique example of a relatively swift and drastic U-turn in the ethnic identity of a seemingly conservative and isolated ethno-religious group. Second, the Karaite case serves as a warning to the students of ethnic identities: one should always carefully weigh statements and publications of representatives of ethnic groups and communities about their identity, religion, and historical past. Sometimes they provide scholars with genuine data, and sometimes—as in the Karaite case—they deliberately deceive. And finally, the Karaite case supports Benedict Anderson’s idea that national identity is a somewhat artificial phenomenon that can be constructed, reconstructed, and deconstructed depending on the current political and ideological agenda.

⁵⁹ This term was coined by Roman Freund in his *Karaites and Dejudaization*.

⁶⁰ Valerii Dymshitz, “Bor’ba za sushchestvitel’noe” [Struggle for a noun], *Narod Knigi v mire knig. Evreiskoe knizhnoe obozrenie* [The people of the book in the world of books. Jewish book review] 50 (2004): 6–13. In January 2007 Oleg Belyi (Sevastopol’) gave me a copy of a letter of the Tat leaders to the highest members of the Communist Party. In this letter they complained about the attempts of several Soviet scholars to prove their Jewish origin (September 1984). I am also grateful to Dr. Mark Kupovetskii (Moscow) for providing me with detailed information in January 2008 regarding the Tats’ de-Judaization. More details on the fate of the Krymchaks during World War II and their de-Judaization may be found in the correspondence of the Krymchaki amateur historian Lev Kaya (esp. L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 1970s–1980s, Archive of the *Vaad* [Jewish council] of Russia, Moscow). A word of thanks goes to the president of the *Vaad*, Professor Mikhail Chlenov, for permission to use Kaya’s collection.

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